



Partners Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management

# A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN ALBANIA



Rockefeller  
Brothers Fund

Philanthropy for an Interdependent World





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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The study aims to provide a historical view of the development of philanthropy in Albania, in different historical periods, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present. The evidence presented has been identified based on existing documents, which actually were not numerous on this subject matter. The study did not go in depth into analyzing the development of philanthropy and charity in the period after 1990, given that this was not part of its scope. The relatively close period with the time when this study was carried out, the vague philanthropic activity during these 20 years and the lack of documentation of this activity by the individuals as well as by the state, requires a different approach to the study.

Partners Albania, assessing as very important the analysis of philanthropic activity during this period, has undertaken and will undertake in-depth studies in this area.

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## INTRODUCTION

Philanthropy in Albania has its own specific history, inextricably linked with the social, economic and historical circumstances that the Albanian population has lived through. The first traces of philanthropy among Albanians originate very early and date back to medieval times. The mutual help and support among people are not features of only Albanians and people who live in our region. They are elements of the human nature itself, which have been present throughout human history in different shapes and different time periods, linked to the development levels and historical periods that human society has gone through. In the case of Albanians, the object of this study on Charity and Philanthropy will be the time period from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which the charitable and philanthropic activity acquired new and specific features. This activity overcame the old systems which were more linked to the Ottoman social organization of the medieval period rather than the local form of social organization.

The major shocks that rocked the old world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, changed the way the world looked and defined the historical processes of all the European countries and wider. These changes affected all levels of life including Charity and Philanthropy. This is why we considered it fit, after analyzing voluminous material on the subject matter, to divide the charitable and philanthropic activity into two phases based on the features it displays: the phase from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1920 and phase after it. During most of the first period, philanthropic activity occurred under conditions generated by the administrative rule of the Ottoman Empire, thus acquiring features distinct from the succeeding time period. It is accurate that Albania gained its independence in 1912, but the proper Albanian state has its roots in the Lushnja Congress and the government that emerged from it. The years 1912-1920 were a time of uncertainties for Albania and that is why it appears slightly different from the preceding period. This continuity from the Ottoman period and the eight years that succeeded it was reflected in the charitable and philanthropic activity as well. In general terms, the features of this activity changed only slightly if at all. This is why we decided to select the year 1920 as the dividing point for structuring this study. It is exactly in the time period after this year that we observe that visible changes happened to this type of social activity. If in the first period, philanthropic activity was carried out by immigrant Albanians living abroad, in the

second period, despite Diaspora's involvement, its engagement began to fade away. Well-off people living in Albania were taking center stage.

However, the establishment of the independent Albanian state did not necessarily result in an increase of the charitable and philanthropic activity. As the Albanians acquired their own state, the idea that what was previously carried out by Albanian immigrants and also by those living in the country was now a duty of the state, started to get established. This coincides with the prevailing of etatism in Albania, where the state was considered as the guardian of society rather than the regulator of relationships and guarantor of the law. This mentality would be strengthened further after the emerging of communism, during which period philanthropic activity completely disappeared. It must be highlighted that the Albanian state became a promoter of charitable and philanthropic activity between the two world wars. This was further emphasized by the circumstances, with the Albanian state having limited financial sources. Charity and philanthropy were seen as alleviating this extraordinarily large burden from the shoulders of the state. However, the Albanian society did not respond accordingly to this enticement.

The part that deals with the post-1920 period will be divided into three subparts, each of which cover respectively the time periods between years 1920-1939, 1939-1944 and 1944-1990. As it may be observed, the chronological division of these parts coincides with the historical periods that the Albanian state went through during the years 1920-1990. During each of these periods, there were important historical changes that would be clearly reflected in the charitable and philanthropic activity in Albania.

The focus of this study will be the charitable and philanthropic activity of not only the Albanians who lived within the borders of today's Albanian state, but also of the Albanians who lived in territories that make up the historical Albanian corpus. Charity and philanthropy developed particularly during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from Albanians living abroad. This is why this study will not be restricted only to the charitable and philanthropic activity of Albanians who lived in Albania. The study would be incomplete if we were to do that.

It is important to emphasize the fact that in most cases, charitable and philanthropic activity had at its core the support to development, modernization and emancipation of the Albanian population. Charity and philanthropy were widely linked to the national Albanian movement. By means of this activity, Albanians have attempted to develop education in

particular, which has been one of the main tasks of the national Albanian movement. As you will discover below, *education has been the key objective of the charitable and philanthropic activity carried out by the Albanians.*

Charity and philanthropy have not been constrained to specific individuals but they have also been the core of activities of charitable societies established precisely for this purpose. In most cases, this activity was directed towards the region or villages where the people involved in charity came from. Origin brought them together.

While considering the issue of charity and philanthropy among Albanians, it is first necessary to clarify these two concepts, as due to their nature, it is often difficult to clearly distinguish between them. Charity in Albanian is the equivalent of the Latin word caritas which derives from the word carus, meaning dear. Thus, it means love for the close ones that encourages people to be involved in good deeds. The word philanthropy derives from ancient Greek and, if one were to translate it literally, it would mean love for mankind. Thus, it exceeds the borders of charity. By caritas, we understand help and support for our loved ones, people that are close to us, while philanthropy has a much wider meaning. It encompasses a much bigger mission and a more noble understanding. Within the context of philanthropy, loved ones are not only the ones who are close to you, but the whole mankind. As an activity, it incorporates all mankind without making any tribal, religious, racial and other discrimination. Thus, philanthropy is also an ideal, a goal that seeks the improvement of human society.

As mentioned above, in most cases, charitable and philanthropic activity among Albanians has been targeted towards nationalism and regionalism. Thus, its purpose was to help those social groups that were characterized as “dear ones” or “closely related through blood, religion or nationality. With a few exceptions, they did not focus on the person as a being and mankind as a society. On a wider meaning, all the Albanians were in their focus. This is the reason why in the case of Albania, it is somewhat difficult at the beginning to identify the Promethean archetype, with which the philanthropic activity is related and which is intertwined with the modern and contemporary meaning of this term. The sphere, within which this activity was conducted, had very narrow boundaries. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the philanthropic activity was lacking in Albania and among Albanians. The truth is that Albanians did have their own Prometheans. If we consider the miserable living conditions, poverty and thorough lack of knowledge of the Albanian population on one hand, and the efforts of the Albanian philanthropists

to disseminate knowledge through education using the latter not only as a simple means to heal society's wounds, but transforming it into a powerful tool, and a stable foundation for a better and prosperous future on the other hand, then we observe that the Albanian philanthropists are very close to the Promethean ideal.

For this reason, taking also into account the conditions Albanians have lived in and their historical needs, we will consider philanthropic activity the activity carried out by those people or societies that focused their work on Albanians and had a wide impact on the Albanian society through the issues they addressed and assistance they provided. Furthermore, Charity and Philanthropy differ in the amount of donations, i.e. money made available for a specific issue. Therefore, another criterion for distinguishing between Charity and Philanthropy would be the amount of money donated. However, we need to be careful with this. Philanthropic activities are those that enable distinct changes in the life of society. This assumes that for such an activity to generate such results, it can only be carried out by rich people. Naturally the following question arises: can wealth serve as a criterion in the Albanian case for identifying societies or people that have carried out philanthropic activities? If we were to stay loyal to the criterion of significant social changes, we cannot take for granted in the Albanian case the rationale that wealth is an implied criterion for identifying philanthropists. Often, the purpose and ideas prevail over limited financial opportunities as they serve as an example, a vision that mobilizes the society and directs it towards the future. This is more valid for the poor and undeveloped Albania. That is why, in the first part of the study which deals with the period when Albania was part of a multinational state, which did very little to improve Albanian livelihoods, we will also assess the purpose and this will serve also as a measuring unit to distinguish philanthropy from charity. Then, in the second part, in which we will discuss the period when Albanians had their own state, the wealth census will serve as an important instrument for distinguishing philanthropy from charity.

In addition to the extent of the activity and the amounts provided, another criterion for distinguishing philanthropy from charity will be the vision of the goal set by the activity. We will also define as philanthropic activities those activities whose purpose was to respond to future needs in addition to current ones. Meanwhile, we will define as charity activities those activities that have had at their core close local interests and have been limited in amounts donated and purpose.

## I. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN ALBANIA FROM THE 19TH CENTURY UNTIL 1920

The development of charity and philanthropy is defined by two basic elements which are, economic power and social values. To better understand the dynamics of the philanthropic phenomenon among Albanians until 1920, it is necessary to preliminarily understand the terrain in which this activity took place. It should be kept in mind that charity and philanthropy in Albanian territories did not emerge out of nowhere. They have their own history and they have evolved dynamically in progress with the historical developments in these areas. Thus, it becomes necessary to present the historical background of Albania particularly during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The analysis of the historical developments of this time period will enable us to understand the interaction between the two above-mentioned elements and from this, the reasons which defined the scale of development of charity and philanthropy.

Albanians have helped and supported people in need since the early days. During medieval times, the church, which was the axis of the whole social, political and economic life, was at the core of the charitable activity.<sup>1</sup> Church institutions that were engaged in these activities, in particular the Catholic Church institutions, are found in the Albanian territory since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Benedictine and Franciscan religious orders for beggars in the city of Shkodra were such examples.<sup>2</sup> The presence of religious orders engaged in education and in all likelihood in charitable works as well, continued to be present in this city even in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the brotherhoods of Saint Mercury and Saint Barbara.<sup>3</sup>

The Ottoman Empire did not cause an interruption of the philanthropic activity, even though in the first centuries following it, this activity did not occur at a high intensity. The only known case is that of Iliaz Bej Mirahori, who established in Korça at the beginning of the 16th century a number of charitable foundations, which were transformed into an important factor for attracting the Muslim population from the villages of the region towards the city.<sup>4</sup> From this point onwards, we believe that the low degree of charity was influenced by the decline in civic life that followed the Ottoman invasion of the country, which completely destroyed Albanian cities, most of which ended up with populations

1. Ermal Baze, *Qyteti i Shkodrës në gjysmën e parë të shekullit XIV*, PhD thesis at University of Tirana, 92.

2. *Ibid.* 97.

3. Injac Zamputi, *Registri i Kadastrës and i koncesioneve për rrëthin e Shkodrës 1416–1417*, Tirana: Academy of Science of the PSRA, 1977, 35.

4. Petraq Pepo, *Materiale Dokumentare për Shqipërinë Juglindore të Shekullit XVIII–Fillimi i Shekullit 20TH (Kodiku i Korës and Selasforit)*, vol. I, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1981, 5–6.

similar to those of the villages.<sup>5</sup> More than a century would go by, before the civic life was regenerated.<sup>6</sup> Examples of charitable activities were very limited at this particular moment. By the end of the 16th century, Albanian cities started to experience a metamorphosis which would transform them step by step from political-military centers to socio-economic centers.<sup>7</sup> Cities now start to recover from destruction, and professional corporations in the form of oriental guilds start to emerge. The foundations for the further development of the city were laid.<sup>8</sup>

The end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century would be characterized from the beginning of the prosperity of the civic life in Albanian territories.<sup>9</sup> Proof of increase of charitable activities started to be observed from this moment. This leads us to the conclusion that there is a strong connection between philanthropic activity and industrial production expressed also through the prosperity of civic life. The diagram of the curve of the city life trend resembles the diagram of charitable and philanthropic activity. The Korça territories were particularly known for these activities. One of the best known personalities in the field of charity in this region was Josif Korçari from Voskopoja. He lived during the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and worked for the establishment of the Voskopoja printing house and Akademia e Re school which was established with money put together by the Voskopoja citizens with the purpose of constructing a school “that others did not have”.<sup>10</sup> He also helped the Varoshi area of Korça to build a boy school for in 1725, towards which the residents of Vithkuqi,<sup>11</sup> Boboshtica and Kostandin Pano Kukuzeli contributed as well.<sup>12</sup>

The prosperity of guilds in the 18<sup>th</sup> century created a strong economic basis for the development of charitable work in Albanian cities, as they donated money for the development of education and culture in the respective cities. Such an example was the decision taken by the rufets (unions) of curriers, saddlers, shoemakers, butchers, etc in Korça in 1738 for the establishment of a boy school in the Greek language, where all the young boys of the city could be educated without discrimination.<sup>13</sup> This role of the guilds in the development of education and culture was not a phenomenon limited to the city and region of Korça only, but it was observed in other cities as well. The development of education

5. Selami Pulaha, “Qytetet shqiptare nën regjimin feudal ushtarak osman gjatë shekujve XV–XVI,” *Monumentet*, no. 1, 1984: 17–18.

6. *Ibid.* 26.

7. *Ibid.* 25.

8. *Ibid.* 40.

9. Zija Shkodra, *Qyteti shqiptar gjatë Rilindjes Kombëtare*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1984, 6.

10. Aurel Plasari, *Fenomeni Voskopjë*, Tirana: Phoenix & ShLK, 2000, 44.

11. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 12, 86–87.

12. *Ibid.* vol. II, doc. 166, 169.

13. *Ibid.* vol. I, doc. 71, 148–149.

experienced a great leap in a number of urban centers, such as Shkodra, Janine and Manastiri, particularly due to the development of the city bourgeoisie and its donations,<sup>14</sup> which were given within the charity setting. We are also aware of the Gjirokastra guilds, which constructed a school near the town bazaar<sup>15</sup> or of the other instance of the construction of a school in Elbasan in 1763 with funds raised from the Christian population of this city.<sup>16</sup> In the absence of regular municipal entities, the maintenance of public infrastructure was carried out by guilds which, through the funds raised, constructed bridges, streets and drinking fountains, opened wells, cleaned the market areas, opened tunnels, etc.<sup>17</sup> Guilds also contributed to the improvement of the urban planning of the cities/towns through the establishment of worship places as a form of continuous support that they gave towards clerical institutions. For example, in Voskopoja, most churches were constructed by the rufet of this city while the Korça Metropolis, which dates back from 1725, was constructed with the money collected from the city guilds.<sup>18</sup> Based on these instances, we conclude that charity has not been an isolated phenomenon and there have certainly been similar instances also in other Albanian territories and cities, but the lack of sources does not allow us to generalize and make more detailed analysis for the period prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, they are a clear evidence of the continuity of charitable activities between the period that preceded the Ottoman Empire and the one that followed it.

One of the features of the charitable activity of this period is its limitation within the boundaries of the clan solidarity and civil guild groups. They aimed at preserving and increasing the homogeneity of the group or members of a specific community, particularly when confronted with other communities or groups. This is clearly demonstrated, for example, in the case of the traders' rufet of Voskopoja.<sup>19</sup> The social functions within the guild groups were also defined and codified in the respective charters. They also carried out social functions that aimed at supporting and helping members and their families in case of need or misfortunes. This mutual support that transformed the guild into a big family was a feature of feudal societies, which shows its closed and collective nature. Help and support were limited to specific vocational groups and would not extend further.

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14. Petrika Thëngjilli, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar 395–1875*, Tirana: ShBLU, 1999, 296.

15. Zija Shkodra, *Qyteti shqiptar gjatë Rilindjes Kombëtare*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences, 1984, 73.

16. Petrika Thëngjilli, *cited document*, 239.

17. Zija Shkodra, *Esnavet shqiptarë*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences, 1973, 256–257.

18. *Ibid.* 238–239.

19. *Ibid.* 254.

Above all, this was mutual solidarity and assistance in the context of a group within a society which was not in the slightest individualistic according to the contemporary concept, but individualistic in the feudal meaning of the word, divided into groups where individuals were identified by the community, and where relationships among communities or social strata were limited. In this context, material support and charity were limited within close groups and served for conserving the homogeneity of the group. In addition to guilds, other promoters of such activities were religious institutions which had historically carried out this function. But even in this case, their charity work was characterized by the same closed nature, focusing within the respective religious community.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new historical developments started to occur, which affected the extent and form of charitable and philanthropic activity. In this period, changes occurred in the Albanian territories which were dictated from the developments that Western Europe was going through. New historical processes would help in the slow but continuous fracturing of the feudal shell inside which the Albanian population was living. This would be reflected later even in the charitable and philanthropic activity in which the new and old elements were fused.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century represents the golden era for Western Europe. Starting from the second half of this century, Western Europe exercised its influence and control over the entire world at a scale unknown before.<sup>20</sup> It was the political, economic and cultural center of the world. The patterns and ideas generated there would inevitably influence the history of societies living in the Balkan Peninsula, one of the first regions influenced by Western developments.<sup>21</sup> Albanian territories were not an exception to the rule, but the scale of this influence was lower than in other countries of the region and in addition to this, it would vary from one region to the other and from one social community to the other. The religious structure of the Albanians was influential in this respect. Religion was very important due to its identity role within the Ottoman Empire. This made Albanian Christians identify themselves as Catholic Latin and rum, or otherwise called, Greek Byzantine Orthodox. Religion equaled national belonging in this multinational, multilingual and multi-religious state. Most of Muslim Albanians maintained their loyalty towards the Ottoman Sultan to a large extent and their cultural orientation was mostly East inclined rather than West.<sup>22</sup> While Porta e Lartë [Sublime Gate] remained a Muslim country until the end, Christian

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20. Donald Kagan, Frank M. Turner, Steven Ozment, *The Western Heritage*, vol. II, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998, 911.

21. Leften S. Stavrianos, “The influence of the West on the Balkans”, në Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Balkans in Transition*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963, 214.

22. Stavro Skëndi, *Zgjimi kombëtar shqiptar*, Tirana: Phoenix & ShLK, 2000, 420.

Albanians who lived in a territory where the position between the ruler and the ruled was defined precisely by the religious factor,<sup>23</sup> were more open towards the West and inclined to absorb more easily the models coming from it, which equaled modernization in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the context of the Ottoman administration system, regional and local particularities developed at a large scale and the identification of the individual with the group and collective identities of the village, region, clan, family, profession or religion continued to be strongly preserved in Albania until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The preservation and even strengthening of these identities would seriously obstruct the development of individualism. This would impact the charitable and philanthropic activity, as these would conserve the features of the typical charity and mutual help of the guild that were happening within the different communities. Thus, in most cases, charity or philanthropy would appear as support that members of a specific residential center, which was related to the local identity, or members of a specific religious community, gave to each other.

Charity or philanthropy towards people in general, regardless of regional or religious belonging, remained an isolated phenomenon during this period. However, it should be noted that the first instances of this type of activity started to emerge during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These instances represented the bell that warned the beginning of changes in the mentality and identities within the Albanian society.

The economy was very rural and backward.<sup>24</sup> Even though the country was rather close to the West and large communication routes, it was very poor and isolated from the rest of the world. The rough mountainous terrain contributed even further to the isolation. The mountains, which had served as fortresses for the Albanians to protect the freedom of their communities, had now transformed into large obstructions for communication and contact with the world. Social dynamics and contacts with the outside world remained at very low levels as the country had no communication routes, it was poor and rural and with a household economy which was often self-sufficient. Albanians remained closed in the medieval society shell for a very long time. Furthermore, most of the population had plunged into ignorance. The education system in the country was much undeveloped. Istanbul had supported the development of religious schools and had completely disregarded the general education.<sup>25</sup> Poverty and lack of development could not create the appropriate grounds for the development of charity and philanthropy, but on the other hand the need for charitable and

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23. *Ibid.* 419.

24. *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. II, Tirana: Toena, 2002, 37.

25. *Ibid.* 39.

philanthropic activity, at a time when the Sublime Gate did not show any willingness to change the situation, was even higher in the context of the extraordinary challenges that the Albanian society was facing.

A society is never monolithic and regional realities change. Albania does not represent an exception to this rule, which was observed even in the way the charitable and philanthropic activity developed. These activities were more developed in some regions of Albania than others. The above-mentioned conditions and circumstances have defined the variability of the intensity of charitable and philanthropic deeds in Albania. But it must be taken into account that if economic, social and political circumstances in Albanian territories were not suitable for the development of charitable and philanthropic activity, what determined the development of philanthropy was largely dictated by the contacts with the world beyond. This does not mean that philanthropy as a practice was borrowed by Albanians.<sup>26</sup> Contacts with the outside world just created the right circumstances for this activity to develop and escalate.

The social dynamics and the acceptance of change by the members of social groups served as a starting point for carrying out this activity, whose key goal was the positive change in society, i.e. progress. Thus, the development and intensity of philanthropic activity was not defined by the lack or presence of inclination or tradition of a part of Albanians to carry out this type of activity, but from certain preconditions necessary to carry it out. This variability that we mentioned above would be defined in a large scale by the extent of links with territories more developed than the Albania. Mobility and movement were important factors that helped the strengthening and development of philanthropy in Albanian territories. This is why, in general, the largest number of Albanian benefactors and philanthropists, during the period covered by this part of the study, were immigrants. Thus, *immigration was an important factor that contributed to the development of philanthropy*. After examining the sources, we came to the conclusion that the mechanism of analyzing the reasons and premises, which have defined the scale and extent of charitable and philanthropic activity during this time, was dictated by regional, geographical, class, social and religious factors.

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26. We must note here, above all, the need to study the influence of the Greek philanthropic model, particularly on the philanthropic activity of the Orthodox Albanians. But on the other hand, we believe that this influence should not be overestimated as charity and philanthropy in Greece was carried out more by the Orthodox of Epirus and in most cases these benefactor and philanthropists were of Albanian origin..

## 1.1 Regional and geographical factors

When we review the regional and geographical factors, we must take into account above all the position of certain regions in terms of their openness to the world and particularly to the West, with modernization and ideas originating from the latter. In general, the south of Albania, in comparison to the north, has been geographically more open to foreign influence.<sup>27</sup> The softer geographic terrain, the better communication means, a higher presence of central government control and the fact that, with a few exceptions, the clannish society in the south of the country had long been disorganized<sup>28</sup> made the south of the country more advanced than the north and with a higher level of educated people.<sup>29</sup> Southeastern Albania distinguished itself in a special way, as it was more open to contacts with the other countries.

Located closer to commercial routes that went across the Balkans, the provinces of this region were more open to the movement of goods, people and ideas. This greater openness to the world would necessarily crack faster the ring of the closed feudal life. The population of these regions would be the first to immigrate. Thus, people from Korça would immigrate to Egypt to work in trade since 1800.<sup>30</sup> This mobility would have its effects on all levels of economic, social and cultural life and would be reflected even in the charitable and philanthropic activity, which would also find an expression in the support provided by the most successful immigrants from these regions to the communities they originated from. This contribution would be reflected in their efforts to develop and improve the lives of their fellow farmers or citizens in accordance with the models they acquired from the countries where they had immigrated to.

The key centers of Albanian immigration were Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and Egypt where Albanians found support from the dynasty of Egyptian khedives, who were of Albanian descent, and later the United States of America.<sup>31</sup> In these countries, they came into contact with a more developed world than their native country. In addition to enrichment opportunities, Albanian immigrants had more opportunities to expand their horizons. They came into contact with the European

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27. Eqrem Çabej, *Shqiptarët midis Lindjes and Perëndimit*, Tirana: Çabej, 1994, 22.

28. Stavro Skëndi, *cited document*, 25.

29. *Ibid.* 419.

30. CSA, fund 97, 1928, d. 22, sheet 1.

31. *Historia e Popullit*, 69–70.

political ideologies and thinking streams, where nationalism occupied a very important place. Western influences would be spread to the southeastern Europe Peninsula also through immigration, which exerted a powerful cultural influence and made the West known to the region particularly through immigrants travelling back to their homeland.<sup>32</sup> As a result, Albanian immigrants would also become the first supporters of Albanian nationalism. Thus, they would often convert into nationalists and modernizers. The type of interaction these two activities had, varied according to individuals. What is important in this case is that immigration is not only a “nursery” of nationalism but also a “greenhouse” where nationalism was farmed. Even when immigrants did not become nationalists, they became promoters of development of the locality they came from. Immigration strengthened their need of clannish and regional solidarity and thus, also their desire to improve and develop the community of their origin. This is how the charitable deeds of Albanian immigrants started, which were firstly oriented towards the support of the village or city they originated from.

## 1.2 Social and class factors

The social and class factors refer to the socio-economic groups to which most of the people who were the promoters of charitable and philanthropic activity belonged. First, in order to carry out philanthropic activity, one needs to initially but not necessarily have a strong economic basis in order to use it for carrying out projects which would have an impact on society in the long run. But one also needs a set of values, not necessarily unchangeable, to put wealth to the use of society. Nevertheless, the capitalist culture of investment and the ideas for improvement were at the core of the drives that stimulated this activity. The goal of philanthropy is change. What philanthropists do not accept in general is the preservation of the status quo which they try to change by following a vision and a strategy.

But not all the social groups share the same values and the same vision. Middle class groups are those usually more prone to accepting change. Values, mentality and wealth intertwine more closely in this group than others for the purpose of philanthropy. Middle class, particularly the large traders, are cosmopolitan by nature. Their frequent contacts with Western and Central Europe, which were experiencing a very high economic growth and had established trade relationships with the

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32. Leften S. Stavrianos, *cited document*, 206.

Balkans<sup>33</sup> due to their needs for raw materials, would cause irreversible developments in the latter. These relations would be carried out mainly through Christian Orthodox traders who traded mostly with the Western and Central part of the Old Continent. These traders would have a revolutionary influence on the Peninsula<sup>34</sup> Even in the case of Albania, the dominant engagement in the charitable and philanthropic activity of this stratum, part of which were the cities' middle class nucleuses and rich farmers who made their fortunes in immigration, was evident.

Being closer to modernization and investment, this group understood earlier than the rest of the population the value of education, knowledge and communication routes, and above all was the first to embrace the positive idea of progress. Tradition and preservation of the status quo conflicted with the very interests and values of this group. *During this period, philanthropy in Albania was closely related to the process and efforts towards modernization.*

In the context of the topic we are analyzing, there are differences observed in the engagement in charitable and philanthropic activity within the middle class. If the Albanian urban middle class continued to be stuck within the ring of the isolated guild mentality, whose rules still continued to be strong in Albanian cities,<sup>35</sup> individuals who became rich in immigration distinguished from the others because potentially their mentality and wealth intertwined better for the purpose of development of philanthropy. These were the so called self-made men, who did not owe their wealth to family and origin or formal education. These men became rich as a result of their talent, energy, sharpness, tireless work and desire for wealth. Enrichment opportunities were created thanks to a non-static society, like the European society had been before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> These people, who had come from rags to riches, became the firmest opponents of the aristocratic society<sup>37</sup> turning to marathon runners of the new and flag-bearers against the old. In the case of Albania, this group was represented by rich Albanian immigrants with a modest background. They, like their European counterparts, were the symbol of the new era that was approaching. Motivated by the desire to modernize their homeland, they became pioneers of the proper philanthropic activity in Albania.

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33. Charles & Barbara Jelavich, *Themelimi i Shteteve Kombëtare të Ballkanit 1804–1920*, Tirana: Dituria, 2004, 21.

34. *Ibid.* 23.

35. *Historia e Popullit...,* 38.

36. Eric Hobsbawm, *The age of revolution*, New York: Vintage Books, 1996, 189.

37. *Ibid.* 185.

These activities, initiated by these extraordinarily rich and successful people, can be regarded as their response, or called their vision towards the two key ways for building tradition in the European society of the time, which interacted in a parallel manner with each other and were: the first, the change of the social landscape required new means to guarantee the cohesion of the groups; and the second, the increasing dynamics of societies required new political directions to send into a crisis the traditional hierarchies that had led the societies until then.<sup>38</sup> We can find both these elements in their philanthropic activity as they would fight the old organization by striving to introduce new types of social cohesion, such as idea of the nation as a purpose and nationalism as an ideology<sup>39</sup> and overturning or reforming the archaic political structures that controlled the Albanian society until that time. Thus, political and social changes conformed, making the charitable and philanthropic activity a powerful means for meeting these purposes. Education would then take here a central role, as knowledge is power in a modern society.

Nevertheless, their philanthropic activity carried the stamp of the Albanian and Balkan mentality and society of the time, from which it never liberated. They could not distance themselves from the group they came from and, consequently, this would find its reflection even in their charitable and philanthropic work, which was generally limited to certain regional or religious communities. This was smartly noted by Faik Konica, who would write that, e.g. nationalism among people from Korça, which was closely related to the charitable and philanthropic activity, had a community nature as all their efforts were concentrated on only guaranteeing the national future Korça.<sup>40</sup>

However, it must be emphasized that immigrants that could accumulate wealth were not the only ones to carry out charitable and philanthropic activities. A large number of Albanian immigrants engaged in charitable and philanthropic activity carried out through societies. Initially, the activity of these societies was related to their homeland in the narrowest meaning of the word, i.e. the village, city or region. Immigrants did not

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38. Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, *The invention of tradition*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 262.

39. When we talk about the embracing of nationalism, we do not necessarily imply only the Albanian nationalism, but also the embracing of other types of nationalisms, such as the Greek one, as it was the case for example with the cousins Vangjel and Kostandin Zhapa or Kristaq Zografi.

40. Nathalie Clayer, *Në fillimet e nacionalizmit shqiptar. Lindja e një kombi me shumicë myslimanë në Evropë*, Tirana: Përpjekja, 2009, 276.

intend to improve the lives of their fellow nationals but of their fellow members from the same village, city or religious group to which they belonged. Thus, the purpose was philanthropic only in a few cases. Furthermore, many charitable societies established by Albanian immigrants were created on the basis of local solidarity. Immigrants coming from a certain village or city tried to help each other through these societies in an utterly foreign place, where they had no support. These societies were similar to the guilds and their social functions. They resembled a large family that served to protect them. It was an image and a reproduction of their homeland's relationships in a foreign country.

As it can be observed, these charitable societies carried within them a strong duality. In addition to the modernization of their homeland following the example of the country they had immigrated to, i.e., in addition to acting as importers of patterns and part of the mechanism disseminating culture, these societies were also exporters of patterns in the opposite direction, as they tried to create the image of the Albanian micro-cosmos in the midst of Albanian communities in the European and American metropolises. This duality is nothing else but an indicator of nationalism in an embryonic phase, where modernization and love for homeland in the narrow regional meaning coexisted without excluding each other.

In this way, the middle class immigrants and particularly those who acquired wealth in immigration were very inclined to invest without interest, thus, to carry out charitable and philanthropic deeds in their homeland with the goal of increasing the capacity of the communities they came from to be integrated in more advanced societies. These rich individuals, in countries where this was possible to achieve through skills and not through social status or religion, tended to create in their homelands a small image of the country where they had acquired their wealth. This does not mean that other social groups or strata were stripped off human feelings and were never involved in such activity. Their engagement was simply more limited than that of the middle class. Unlike this class, the beys class, which had the economic means to carry out charitable and philanthropic activities, was significantly less engaged. In reality, the capitalist spirit and investment ethics were less prominent within this segment of the Albanian society. Being used to inherit wealth due to tradition and social status, the majority of this group was less inclined to carry out philanthropic activities, the purpose of which was change. In fact, modernization, dynamics and change did not serve this group as its wealth was based on tradition.

As per the Albanian farmers, they had neither the wealth nor the necessary values to perform such an activity. The common Albanian farmers lived in a narrow world and they were fully ignorant and often very poor. This stratum was completely unaware of the ideal of development and progress and consequently completely unaware of philanthropic activity. The most they would be involved in was the mutual help to members of the community, and this was done in the context of the clannish solidarity, which cannot really be regarded as charity and even less as philanthropy. Exceptions to this rule were several villages in the region of Korça, which were not typical Balkans villages. Centers like Vithkuqi, Drenova, Mborja, Boboshtica, etc. were important trade centers not only for Albania but even further. Just to provide a meaningful fact, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Korça kaza (administrative unit) had 1175 shops in 168 villages,<sup>41</sup> which clearly shows the development of the trade market in this territory and consequently, also the extensive relations it had with the Albanian and non-Albanian territories. In addition, immigration was very developed in these centers. The development of the urbanization and immigration process is the reason why charitable societies, whose purpose was the development of education and improvement of the village's living conditions, were founded in these villages.

### 1.3 Religious factor

Meanwhile, when we take the religious factor as a criterion, we must note that none of the four religions existing in Albanian obstructed this activity, on the contrary, both Islam and Christianity, in the respective branches that have been embraced by Albanians, have charity at their core as they are religions that firstly inspire brotherhood among people and emphasize human values. Thus, this criterion does not refer to the role that religious belief has played as a promoter of philanthropy and charity, but to the role that religious belonging had during this period in establishing contacts with the Western society. It must be said that the Christians were the first ones to immigrate becoming more involved in intensive social dynamics than the rest of their fellow nationals. However, even among them, the Albanians of the southeastern Albania, who belonged to the Orthodox religion, had more intensive contacts with the West.

An important element that is worth emphasizing is that while charitable and philanthropic activities among Orthodox Albanians were carried

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41. *Historia e Popullit..., 51.*

out by non-religious people, when it came to Catholic Albanians, these activities were carried out by clerical institutions of the Catholic Church. In reality, the Catholic Church had powerful charitable institutions since medieval times, which became more powerful particularly following the reform that succeeded the Council of Trento after the establishment of certain religious orders such as the Orders of the Jesuit, Oratorio or Ursuline sisters, which were intensively involved in philanthropic activities.<sup>42</sup> This action was an important foundation stone in the work and politics of Vatican for strengthening and spreading the Catholic religion. This Church has preserved its strong position in this activity throughout the New Time until the present time. Consequently, we could conclude that the charitable and philanthropic activity was carried out by specific individuals or reestablished charitable societies where traditional institutions which had carried out this activity had broken down or were not performing it anymore.

The fall of guilds and lack of charitable and philanthropic activities by the Orthodox Church in the south of the country provided room for actions of specific individuals or charitable societies established on the initiative of different communities. But individual charitable and philanthropic activity had little room where the traditional institutions remained strong. This explains why in Shkodra and its regions this activity was led by traditional institutions like the Catholic Church. This does not mean that specific individuals have not contributed to this activity but their assistance must have been channeled through the Catholic Church.

In the meantime, the documentation we possess does not allow us to trace the charitable and philanthropic activities of Muslim religious institutions. However, based on existing data, Muslim religious institutions, just like the Orthodox ones, remained little engaged in the field of philanthropy. There were many instances of charitable and philanthropic activity among the Muslim population, but in comparison to the size of the Muslim population, it remained generally little engaged.

As a conclusion, charity and philanthropy work throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1920 experienced a large development among the orthodox of southeast Albania due to their openness to the Western influence. They were involved earlier in the modernization process and members of this group secured the necessary funds to be used for charitable and philanthropic activities. Thus, among the southeastern orthodox

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42. Robert Roswell Palmer & Joel Colton, *A History of the modern World*, New York: Alfred A. Knopff, 1983, 89.

Albania, there was a conformance between necessary values and economic opportunities for the charitable and philanthropic activities to experience a prominent and distinguished development. During the same period, this symbiosis occurred less frequently in other areas of the country and would expand only in later periods.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the analysis and diagram explaining the conditions that enabled or obstructed the development of charitable and philanthropic activities among Albanians reflects the sources on the matter. This analysis might be completely reversed with the emergence of new sources. However, the literature available leads us to the above conclusions. There is no doubt that charity has been present in all Albanian territories as it was a founding stone for all religious beliefs embraced by the Albanian population. Many have given their contribution and support to the religious institutions and the poor. This can be easily verified through the Korça and Selasfori Codex, which unfortunately is the only documented summary of the 17-19<sup>th</sup> century period which speaks of numerous charity acts by the Christian Orthodox population of Korça. But this has absolutely not been a phenomenon limited to the population of this region. There is no doubt that also other Albanians, regardless of their region or belief, made donations to religious institutions when possible, not to mention that this activity was a pillar of religious beliefs present among Albanians.

However, the lack of documentation makes it difficult to identify instances and analyze the philanthropic activity in other segments of the Albanian society. The development of such an activity from the level of charity to that of philanthropy represents a less debatable issue as the philanthropic activity is related to a number of modernizing processes to which not all Albanian territories displayed the same level of openness in the same manner and at the same time.

## 1.4 Distinguished philanthropists and benefactors

### 1.4.1 Region of Gjirokastra

One of the most distinguished philanthropists of Albanian origin is Vangjel Zhapa from Labova e Madhe village in Gjirokastra. Born in 1800 in a poor family, Vangjel Zhapa first immigrated at the age of 14 to Janine, where he was supported by his cousin Vangjel Meksi, a well-known doctor in this town. There he learnt the secrets of medicine, which would serve him in the future.



Vangjel Zhapa

After the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, Vangjel joined the Greek army where he was also awarded several medals for his bravery. After the foundation of the Hellenic state, he was appointed as an officer in the Greek army, but Vangjel decided to leave Greece, and in 1830 he would immigrate to Rumania, where he had a stroke of luck. Due to practicing medicine,

he became the owner of many real estate properties, which he would manage with great skill. He invested his extraordinary profits and thanks to the insight he had into entrepreneurship, he expanded his property, becoming one of the richest people in Rumania. Never married, Vangjel Zhapa decided to use his wealth for charitable and philanthropic deeds. His philanthropic activity extended to Rumania, southern Albania, Ottoman Empire, and above all to Greece. The focus of this activity was the orthodox population. Maecenas of art and science and supporter of revolutionary movements in the Balkans, which aimed at liberating the Christian populations in the Balkans, Vangjel Zhapa had an extensive activity.

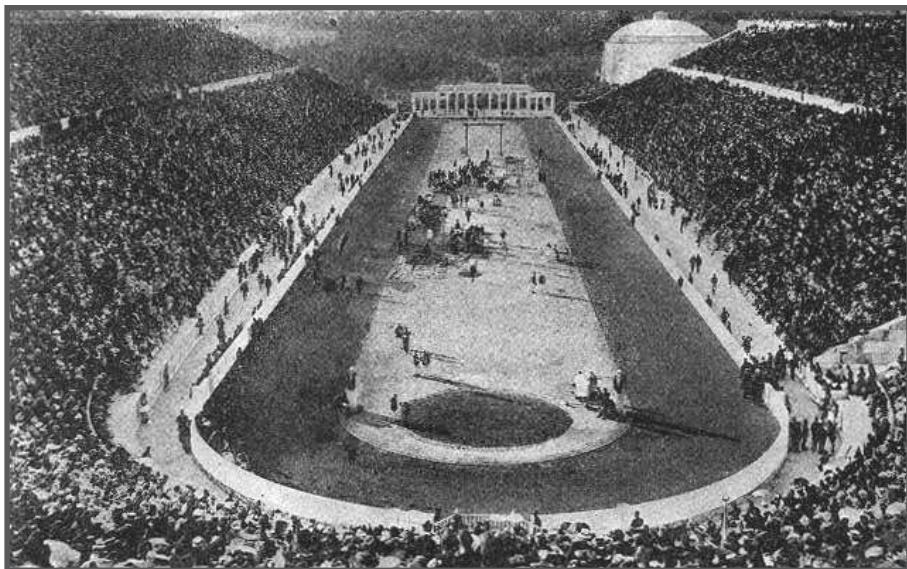
Thus, he did not remain indifferent to the Albanian nationalists, who were promoting the development of Albanian culture and education. Hence, he financed the publication of the first Albanian Abetare/ABC-book prepared by Naum Veqilharxhi, supported the creation of an alphabet of the Albanian language based on the Greek alphabet, funded the newspaper Pellazgu published in Albanian in Lamia in Greece<sup>43</sup>, funded the opening of schools in a number of orthodox villages of the region of Gjirokastra and Vlora, such as Labova, Derviçan, Lekël, Dhrujan,



Naum Veqilharxhi

Bubës, Hundkuq, Piqeras, Nivicë, Delvinë, Përmet, Nivan, Karjan, Filat and Qeparo. Labova, his birthplace, was particularly in his focus. He opened a girl vocational school, built three water supply systems and funded the paving of the village roads.

43. Qirjako Hila, *Vangjel Zhapa*, Tirana: Iliria, 2003, 38.



Besides these, Vangjel Zhapa funded the opening of girls schools in Adrianopolis and Constantinople, the construction of the University of Bucharest, the Rumanian Academy of Sciences, the Exhibition Palace in Athens and the construction of the Olimpic stadium in Athens.<sup>44</sup> He also funded the re-launching of the Olympic Games in Greece,<sup>45</sup> which would continue further with the support of another Albanian from the village of Qestorat of Gjirokastra, Kristaq Zografi,<sup>46</sup> who was one the richest people in Greece. Vangjel Zhapa, together with other rich Albanians from southern Albania, such as Apostol Arsaqi, Simon Sina, Jani Banga, Jani Dhima and others supported financially the construction of important public works in Athens, such as the University of Athens, the National Library and the Greek Academy.<sup>47</sup> A Greek historian wrote: "No part of the Greece has given birth to as many philanthropists as Epirus."<sup>48</sup> In fact, the lands claimed as Greek are Albanian and if one moves away from the Greek ultranationalist discourse, most of the great philanthropists considered Greek were orthodox Albanians, who helped and supported the development and empowerment of the Greek state due to religious belonging.

44. Iliaz Goga, *Mirëbërës shqiptarë të arsimit*, Tirana: Albin, 2003, 111-115.

45. Qirjako Hila, *cited work*, 29.

46. *Ibid.* 33.

47. *Ibid.* 44.

48. *Ibid.* 46.

The cult objects could not remain outside the focus of the philanthropic work of Vangjel Zhapa. So, in the Albanian territories, he built with his own funding, the church of Lekli, the church of Papandia in Labova, the monastery of Tërbuq and the mosque of Hormova, whereas beyond this territory, he built the large Shën Triadhi church in Constantinople and the Evangelical church in Brosteni, Rumania.<sup>49</sup>

According to the will he wrote in 1860, his wealth would be used for philanthropic deeds, a particular part of which related to Labova, and a number of other Albanian orthodox villages, in which Zhapa's fortune was to be used to develop education. A commission was established in Athens for the administration of his inheritance, but it never performed its task. In actual fact, fortunes of other Albanian, who had deposited their money in Greek banks to be used for charitable deeds in their birthplace, suffered the destiny of Vangjel Zhapa's wealth as well. In most cases, their wills never became reality. Moreover, they were used by the Greek Sillogue to the detriment of the Albanian national cause. The lack of an Albanian state would urge a lot of these immigrants to deposit the money in foreign banks, particularly Greek banks, suffering abuses from them latter. For this reason, a considerable part of them remained attempting philanthropists and benefactors as few things were built given that their fortunes were not allowed to be used.

In the correspondence between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior in 1923 make their appearance the names of people involved in charity from the orthodox villages of Gjirokastra, who had deposited money in the National Bank of Greece to build schools in the villages of Dhruvjan and Livina. The most distinguished ones were Qirjako Llapa and Petro Packa from Dhruvjan, as well as Dhimitër Elimi from Livina, having deposited considerable amounts<sup>50</sup> in the above mentioned bank.

Other people involved in charity from this region were Llukan Koçi from Labova e Vogël, who emigrated to Rumania and Ilia Harito from Nivani. In the will he wrote in 1894, Llukan Koçi had allocated a sum of 1,000 golden francs to pay the teacher's salary in his village of birth, as well as a sum of 1,200 golden francs for the weddings of poor girls in his village<sup>51</sup>, and 200 napoleons for the construction of a school<sup>52</sup>, whereas Ilia Harito used his wealth to contribute to a girl vocational school in

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49. *Ibid.* 48.

50. CSA, fund 151, 1923, d. 54, sheet 25.

51. CSA, fund 195, 1923, d. 125, sheet 8.

52. *Ibid.* sheet 2.

Nivan.<sup>53</sup> Even in this case, it is not known whether the wills of these two Albanian immigrants were ever executed. There is no clear indication in the documents of that period.

### **1.4.2 Region of Përmet**

Compared to the number of population and its territorial expansion, Përmeti is one of the Albanian regions, which has had the highest number of benefactors to education.<sup>54</sup> One of the first humanitarians of this region was Pano Zoto, a merchant from Përmet, who traded with Austria. Since 1778, he set up a seven-year school,<sup>55</sup> whereas in 1785 he founded the Llaso of Përmeti by depositing a sum of 50,000 Austrian golden coins to a bank in Vienna.<sup>56</sup> Its interest was to be used for setting up Greek schools in Përmeti and for helping poor Përmeti girls get married, as well as for supporting families of disabled people.<sup>57</sup> Arsaq Hotova, Pano Zoto's coeval, set aside a considerable sum in 1788 for opening an agricultural school<sup>58</sup> in Përmet. He also established a school in the Hotova village, which was run with money he deposited in the bank.<sup>59</sup> Another humanitarian from Përmeti, who considerably contributed to the Llaso of his town, was Thanas Panajoti, who, in 1859, in his will, donated a sum of 10,000 grosh<sup>60</sup> towards education in his birthplace. Arqimandriti Agathangjel is another well-known philanthropist from Përmet, who in 1864 donated to the education fund his entire wealth of 20,000 grosh.<sup>61</sup> Stathaq Duka, merchant and craftsman from the same town, wrote in his will that his wealth be used for scholarships to Përmeti boys to study in universities, as well as to help the poor.<sup>62</sup> Kostandin Kena from Lavidhi village also contributed to charity for the development of education in this region. Kena, who had immigrated to Egypt, left in his will in 1913, an amount of 20,000 Egyptian liras deposited in a Greek bank, for setting up schools in Përmeti.<sup>63</sup> We have no available data as to what happened with the money. In 1923, the Albanian government, urged by the grave financial problems, started to take an interest in collecting the money left as donation/charity by

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53. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 119-120.

54. *Ibid.* 129.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 199, 99–100.

57. CSA, fund 151, year 1923, d. 54, sheet 29.

58. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 134.

59. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 194, 96.

60. *Ibid.* doc. 199, 100.

61. *Ibid.*

62. CSA, fund 151, 1923, d. 54, sheet 29.

63. *Ibid.* sheet 11.

Albanian immigrants for the development of education in Albania. However, we have no information on the steps that were taken to collect the money of Kostandin Kena and how this matter was resolved. Other benefactors were Josif Fane, who donated a house to the orthodox community in Përmeti to be converted into a school, as well as Petro Moçka, Dhimitraq Anastasi and Paskal Çali, who gave their modest contributions to charitable causes and in particular to education.<sup>64</sup> The orthodox community of Përmeti also raised funds to set up a boy school and a girls school.<sup>65</sup>

The bektashian clergy gave also an important contribution to charity field, but documentation in this respect is lacking. One of the bektashian clergy benefactors was Baba Kamber Sadiku from Përmeti. Linked to the National Movement since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the occupation of southern Albania in 1913 by the Greek armies, he left for Rumania, where he lived during World War I. There, he was murdered by robbers who had mistaken him for a rich person. Before dying, he had left a will that all his wealth be used for opening a primary school in the worship place of Derbendi to teach dervishes, muhibs and their children, as well as for opening a vocational school.<sup>66</sup>

### ***1.4.3 Region of Korça***

The region of Korça occupies a place of honor in the field of charity and philanthropy. The people from Korça were the first to immigrate away from the Albanian territories, hence they were the first to recognize and understand the importance of the developments Europe was living through. In many cases the immigrants from Korça were very successful in their business activities and became very rich. This way, the combination of two essential elements, wealth and values, is often encountered among them. This became even more true considering the large number of immigrants coming from this area.

But, as proven by documents, the charity tradition had been powerfully present in the region of Korça since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the town and suburbs population consistently supported the clerical institutions in the construction of a series of cult artworks.<sup>67</sup> If we consider that

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64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.* sheet 30.

66. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 132–133.

67. Petraq Pepo, *cited work*, vol.I, doc. 6, 79; doc. 7, 79–82; doc. 8, 82–83; doc. 9, 83–84; doc. 12, 85–89; doc. 13, 90–94; doc. 14, 94–95; doc. 15, 95–97; doc. 16, 97–98; doc. 17, 98–101; doc. 18, 101–106; doc. 72, 149; doc. 73, 149–150; doc. 75, 151.

these documents reflect only the contribution of the orthodox part of the population of this area at that time, and consider in addition benefaction deeds of the Muslim population, on which unfortunately, currently we possess no documentation, we come to the conclusion that charity was very developed in this territory. What is impressive is also the high involvement of women in this activity. The donations would also continue with the same intensity in the 19th century.<sup>68</sup>

Given the prevailing atmosphere in this large southeastern center there would undoubtedly be individuals, who distinguished themselves with the donations they provided. Since 1801, the name of Pavillo Molencki emerges, a merchant from Voskopoja living in Poland, who donated considerable sums to the churches of Korça and the Greek school located there.<sup>69</sup> He is mentioned again in 1860 for the continuous financial support, this time given when he was in Russia, towards the school of Korça and the orthodox clerical institutions of this town.<sup>70</sup> While in 1832, Limon Doda donated a shop and a large number of his commercial shares to the school in town.<sup>71</sup> In 1839 Anastas Bogdan Cali donated shops, land and vintages to the school in town<sup>72</sup>, whereas in 1849, Vasil Shrondo, an immigrant in Sistova, Bulgaria, donated 1,000 grosh to the Greek school there.<sup>73</sup>



It is worth mentioning the contribution given by the pashas of Plasa to supply potable water to Korça. Thus, a water storage facility was built in 1799 by Mehmet Pashë Plasa close to Drenova and later these facilities were spread throughout the city neighborhoods and were maintained with his sons' funding.<sup>74</sup>

One of the most famous philanthropists of this region is Anastas Avram Lakçe. Born in the city of Korça in 1820, Lakçe

68. *Ibid.* vol.I, doc. 19, 106–110; doc. 20, 110; doc. 29, 115–117; doc. 31, 117–118; doc. 66, 143–144; doc. 109, 187–188; doc. 110, 188–189; *Ibid.* vol.II, doc. 135, 29–30; doc. 138, 31; doc. 139, 31–32; doc. 149, 39;

69. *Ibid.* vol.I, doc. 8, 82.

70. *Ibid.* doc. 110, 188–189.

71. *Ibid.* doc. 25, 113.

72. *Ibid.* doc. 34, 119–120.

73. *Ibid.* doc. 86, 162–165.

74. *Ibid.* vol.II, doc. 185, 91.

immigrated early to Romania, where he became rich by tradin. He was very active in supporting the Albanian nationalistic societies founded in the Romanian capital and sponsored their activities. Among others, he funded the publication of several works of Naim Frashëri, among which Bagëti e Bujqësi. Lakçe donated sufficient money to set up Albanian schools in Korça and for education in general in this town. So in 1863, together with his brother, Dhimitri, he donated 300 Turkish liras to the Llaso of Korça for the establishment of a new school.<sup>75</sup> As a result of this activity, which regarded education as an integral part of the national cause, he ran up against the Orthodox Church and the Greek supporters of this town.<sup>76</sup> After his death, in 1890, following his wish expressed in the will, his wealth was deposited in the National Bank of Greece in Athens. This property would be used for a series of philanthropic purposes that ranged from the establishment of a vocational school in Korça to building places of worship in his birthplace and in Bucharest, to supporting the Orthodox clergy in Korça, to supporting a hospital in Athens and to help Korça poor girls to get married.<sup>77</sup> But Anastas Lakçe's desire never came true as his money disappeared the same way as that of many other Albanians. In fact, Greek banks did their utmost to block the investment of such money in the Albanian territory as such an act would have run contrary to the goals and policies of official Athens.

Another Korça citizen known for his charitable and philanthropic work during the 19th century was Jovan Banka, born into a noble family. He immigrated since the age of 20 to Egypt, where he made a big fortune in agriculture.<sup>78</sup> Then he left for Romania, where he continued his business in the new Balkan state. There Jovan Banka connected with another well-known Albanian, Vangjel Zhapa. At an old age, he would move permanently to Greece, where he would build a range of large hotels in Athens.<sup>79</sup> When he was alive, he used a considerable part of his wealth to improve the public infrastructure of Korça. So he built the water supply system and a series of drinking fountains, to be known in town as the Banka drinking fountains<sup>80</sup> and a gymnasium/high school to be known until recently as the Lyceum of Banka.<sup>81</sup> He was also known for donating 25,000 grosh to the church of Korça.<sup>82</sup> Before dying, in

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75. *Ibid.* doc. 169, 70.

76. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 26-28.

77. *Ibid.* 30-31.

78. *Ibid.* 34-35.

79. *Ibid.* 36.

80. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 180, 87.

81. *Ibid.* 34-36.

82. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 9, 83.

1905, Banka wrote his will, according to which his wealth would be deposited into the National Bank of Athens and a part of its interests would be used for a number of beds in two hospitals of Athens for patients from Korça, for funding a Greek orphanage so that the girls from Korça were sheltered there, and for maintaining the gymnasium of Bangjion in Korça. But once again money did not reach its destination and the Greek bank abused it.<sup>83</sup> Even his elder brother, Jorgji Banka, who had accompanied his brother to Egypt, developed an extensive charitable activity. After his death in exile, in 1859, he donated 25,000 grosh to the Mitropolis of Korça,<sup>84</sup> 50,000 grosh to the schools of Korça and 25,000 grosh to the city of Athens.<sup>85</sup>

Petro Kostandin Tokli, born in Korça in 1832 immigrated to Egypt at an early age. Living in Cairo, he practiced tailoring and trading. In 1872, when he was at the age of 40, due to his poor state of health, he wrote his will according to which he donated a part of his property to the Llaso of Korça to help poor girls marry and to the schools in his birthplace. He bestowed another part of his property to the church of Korça and the orphanage of Athens. His testament was kept closed at the Consulate of the Kingdom of Greece in Cairo,<sup>86</sup> but we have no information whether his will was executed.

Sotir Naso Poti, Jovan Cico Gjançi, Naum Mborja, Grigor Sotir Mborja, Angjelina Kostari, Kostandin Filipi and Vasil Prifti are also among Korça immigrants who immigrated to Egypt and contributed to charitable activities.<sup>87</sup>

Another Korça immigrant known in the field of philanthropy is Mandi Terpo. Together with his brothers Mandi immigrated to Wallachia where he conducted trade. Involved with the Albanian nationalist groups of Bucharest, the Terpo brothers did not spare themselves in supporting the Albanian National Movement.<sup>88</sup> However, Mandi was the most distinguished. His house would be the place where the first Albanian school was opened.<sup>89</sup> In his will drafted in 1892, when he was at the age of 48, two years before his death, he dedicated the majority of his wealth, an amount of 143,000 gold francs, to the publication of books

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83. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 38-41.

84. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 110, 188.

85. *Ibid.* doc. 43, 123.

86. *Ibid.* vol. II, doc. 135, 42-46.

87. *Ibid.* doc. 180, 87-88.

88. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 43-44.

89. *Ibid.* 45.

in Albania and the development of the Albanian language.<sup>90</sup> This is the first case we are aware when an Albanian immigrant transcends local boundaries and extends the vision of his activity to a much broader level than that, the national level. His relatives and the Romanian Parliament abused the money, so the Albanians and their national cause did not benefit anything from the wealth of this patriot.

The long list of people from Korça contributing to charity includes also immigrants to Greece, such as Vasil Caci, an immigrant to Piraeus, who donated in 1873 to the Llaso of Korça 100 English liras for opening a primary school in town,<sup>91</sup> the brothers Pandeli and Konstandin Cale, immigrants to Lamia, who donated in 1873 to the “Vëllazëria e Miqve të të Vobektëve” society ,1000 Turkish liras, as well as Ilia Cale, also an immigrant to Lamia, who left 100 liras to the Llaso of Korça after his death.<sup>92</sup>

Besides these notable people in Korça and its surroundings, there were also a number of other personalities, who gave considerable contribution in the field of charity. Among those we can mention Irakli Duro from Drenova, who built a girls school in Korça and became the founder of “Drenova” charitable society, which aimed to help the recovery of Drenova. He left 25,000 gold francs to build a hospital in Korça; his will was never executed.<sup>93</sup> Two other benefactors from Drenova were Nikola Kristo, a clergyman holding the position of the protopope and his grandson Efthim Kristo, who donated 3500 Turkish liras from their wealth in the service of their native village, 2,500 of which would be distributed to the poor and the other 1,000 were deposited in a bank in Bucharest, and its interest would be used to cover the expenses of the village school.<sup>94</sup> One of the areas in the region of Korça having a great reputation was also Kolonja, whose residents have distinguished themselves in several aspects, including humanism and charity. Lazar Gjergj Qiriazi, from the village of Sorkovot, was one of the many Kolonja sons, who immigrated to Romania during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After his death, in 1915, he left in his will 100,000 lei to establish a school in his native village.<sup>95</sup> Ali Zenel Dibra was another benefactor who came from Pogradeci, another area of Korça. Living in a strong education-loving environment, Dibra donated a part of his wealth to education in his hometown immediately after World War I.<sup>96</sup>

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90. *Ibid.* 97.

91. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 169, 62.

92. *Ibid.* doc. 180, 87.

93. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 50-52.

94. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 190, 189.

95. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 60.

96. *Ibid.* 58.

Kristo Kotadi is another immigrant from Korça involved in charity, who gave considerable contribution to the development and progress of his native town. Immigrating as a child to Romania, he acquired great wealth. However, trade was not the only activity he was interested in. He became involved in the Albanian National Movement based in Bucharest. There Kristo would give a great contribution to the establishment of the Albanian Orthodox Church. In 1918, shortly before he died, he left in his will 12,000 napoleons to build a hospital in Korça, followed by other 20,000 napoleons left by his brother-in-law Irakli Duro. But the money was overtaken by Kristo Kotadi's sister and the fund was not used for the purpose intended by these benefactors.<sup>97</sup>

Another Korça immigrant to Romania, who left his wealth to charity, was Dhionis Naum Ndine. In the will he had written before he died in 1917, Ndine had intended part of his wealth for the poor people of Korça. In 1922, the municipality of this town decided to keep this amount deposited in a safe bank until the value of the lei, which had fallen by that time, increased.<sup>98</sup> Gaqo Avramushi from Korça was another immigrant to Egypt, who after his death left a will, according to which he donated 1,000 liras to build a hospital in Korça.<sup>99</sup> In the early 1920s, some Albanians living in Egypt tried to encourage Korça municipality to address the issue of Gaqo Avramushi's testament, but these efforts did not prove to be successful.<sup>100</sup> This issue would be resolved in 1937, when the Council of Ministers in accordance with the applicable law received the gift, but instead of establishing a hospital, which was already built in this city, it established a bacteriological laboratory.<sup>101</sup> (Photo in page 29,30) This early rooted tradition in Korça would continue with the same momentum in the period that followed. During this time Korça continued to be one of the most powerful cultural centers of Albania and above all the main and best example of social emancipation.

#### ***1.4.4 Region of Vlora***

The region of Vlora has also had benefactors. Himara was particularly outstanding in the area of charitable activity. The Bregu residents were the first from this region to immigrate. Historically linked to the West, and especially Italy, since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Himara has been consistently linked to the foreign world, much more than other parts of the region of Vlora. Like Korça and Gjirokastra, the Bregu residents became rich while working in various parts of Europe and Egypt.

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97. *Ibid.* 55–56.

98. CSA, fund 151, year 1923, d. 54, sheet 2.

99. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 52.

100. CSA, fund 424, year 1923, d. 301, sheet 40.

101. *Official Journal*, no. 52, 19 July, 1937, 2.

## Fletorja Zyrtare

Paltimi :	Per nji mot në Shqiponi	Fr. ari 12
Jashta . . . . .	> w	30
Nji copë e javës . . . . .	> >	0,20
> " " katueme . . . . .	> >	1
Per numrat special caktohen herë pas here		
Lajmerim . . . . .	> w	10
Shpallje . . . . .	> >	10
Shpallje ankandi per nji kolosë . . . . .	w >	5

Drejtimi : Ministria së P. të Mbrendësimeve  
Redakcia së Fletore Zyrtare

TIRANE

Telef. Gjydarmeria Nr. 14

Redaktor : ZEF M. DAJÇI

Ministri kompetent ngarkohet me shpalljen dhe  
Urdhërohet për zbatimin e këtij Dekretit.

Durrës me 9 Korrik 1937.

ZOG d.v.

Kryeministri:

K. Kotta d.v.

Ministri i Financave  
K. Thaqi d.v.

## Pranim Dhurante

### Këshilli Ministruev

Vendim Nr. 741 me 2.7.1937

Këshilli Ministruev në mbledhjen e Tij të sotme të mbajtun nën Kryesin e Z. Keco Kotta, Kryeministër e Zav. Ministrë i P. Botore, me antarë Z.Z. Thoma Orologa, Ministri i Drejtësis, Ekrem Libohova, Ministri P. të Jashime, Musa Juka, Ministri P. të Mbrendësimeve, Kol Thaqi, Ministri i Financave, Faik Shatku, Ministri i Arsimit, Terenc Toçi, Ministri i Ekonomisë Kombëtare, pati në bisedim shkresen Nr. 14/17 datë 24.VI.1937 të Drejtoris P. të Shendetisë përcjellë me shkresën Nr. 5866 datë 28.VI.1937 të Ministrit se P. të Mbrendësimeve, me të cilën tregon se i ndjeri Gaq Avramushi, nga Korça, e banut në Kairo, në kohen e

fundit të jetës së tij me një shpirë madhesi dhe me ndjenjat e patriotizmes humaçtare me testament të posaçem ka dhurue nga pasunija e tij nji-mijë lira sterline për ngrejjen e dbe pajosjen e nji Laboratori Bakteriologjik në qytetin e Korçës në vend lindjen e tij, ue shenue si ekzekutor per kete testament vleranë e tij Vangel Avramushi dhe ky i fundit ka emrue përfaqësues dhandrin e tij Z. Vasili Avramia. Dupuqet i Korçës, dhe sikonët dihet 1000 lira sterline vlefte aprovativisht 750 napolona, e prej kësaj shume do të zbriten takat relative te caktueme n'atë vend mbi trashigimin e dhuratat, dhe me këto baza në marrëveshtje me Institutin Bakteriologjik të qendres e me përfaqësuesin e ekzekutorit, e me nji ingjiner kompetent, ashtu perpilue planin i duhuri ndertimi i të cilit nuk i kapërcejë t 7000 fr. ari, dhe me tjerat do të komplotohen me veglat dhe instrumentata e nevojshme, e ma në fund për realizimin e këtij qellimi kërkon :

- I. Pranimin e kësaj dhuratë;
- II. Lejimin që kjo ndertesa të ngrehet në tokat Shtetore në zotimin e sotmë të Spitalit;
- III. Per ngrejjen e kësaj godine të formohet nji komision në kryesin e Prefektit, me antarë Kryetarin e Bashkis, Drejtoria e Spitalit dhe Z. Vasili Avramit ose prej atij që kë do të delegojë;
- IV. Ky komision të ketë të drejtë me adjudikatë ose me lejtacion privat ose si i shofin t'arsyeshme të kujdeset për ngrejjen e kësaj godine;

V. Per shenje mirënjojeje, dhe për ankurazhimin në veprat të kësilla bamicësje, në godinën që do ngrebet të shenohet në nji pilakë të veçant gjithur në hyrje emri i dhuruesit të kësaj veprë,

Vendosi:

Pranimimin e kësaj dhurate, dhe i paraqtron këtë Vendim Nati Madhësin së Tij Mbretit për dekretim, dhe mbasi të dekretohet autorizon Drejtoria e P. të Shendetisë me vepre si ma siper për ngrejjen e kompletimit me instrumentat e nevojshme i instituti të siper-permendur.

ZOGUL

Mbreti i Shqiptarve

Tue pamë vendimin Nr. 741 datë 2.VII.1937 të

Evidences related to the testament of Gaq Avramushi,  
Journal no.52, 19 July 1937, 2.

Këshillit Ministrer, paraqite me shkresën Nr. 1672 datë 5.7.937 të Kryeministrit,

#### D E K R E T O N

Aprovimin e vendimit të sipër permendun të Këshillit Ministrer, mbi pranimin e një dhurase prej 1.000 (j.li) lira sterline, i lanuna me testament prej të ndjerit Gaqi Avramushi nga Korça, i cili banonte në Kairo, për ngrejtjen dhe komplimini e një laboratoirit Bakteriologjik në Korçë dhe Urdhënzon zbatimin e tij.

Durrës, me 9 Korrik 1937.

Z O G. d. v.

Kryeministri:

K. Kotta d. v.

Ministri i P. Mbrendshme

Musa Juka. d. v.

#### Shperblim i njihershëm

#### Z O G U L

Mbreti i Shqiptarve

Tue pamë vendimin 219 datë 18 VI-937 të Komisionit Pensioneve, paraqitë me shkresën Nr. 1256/I datë 2-VII-937 të Kryesis së Këshillit Ministrer, si dhe art. I të Dokret-Ligjes datë 1.II-937 dhe art. 55 të ligjës së pensioneve civilë dhe ushtarakë me date 20.VI-934.

#### D E K R E T O N

Aprovimin e vendimit të sipër permendun të Komisjonit të Pensioave, mbi akordimin e shperblimit të njihershëm prej frari 1500. ajmije e pes qind, Z. Hamdi Qeskut, ish polic i mbetur jafta kuadrit në Qershuer 1935 dhe i vaem në disponibilitet, dhe urdhënzon zbatimin e tij.

Durrës, me 9 Korrik 1937.

Z O G. d. v.

Kryeministri:

K. Kotta d. v.

Ministri i Financave:

Kol Thaqi d. v.

#### Shperblim i njihershëm

#### Këshilli Ministrer

#### Vendim Nr. 750 me 7-VII-937

Këshilli Ministrer në mbledhjen e Tij të sotshme të mbajtue nën Kryesin e Z. Koço Kotta, Kryeministër e Zav. Ministri P. Boiore, me antarë Z.Z. Thoma Orologa, Ministri i Drejtësisë, Etrem Libohova, Ministri i P. te Jashime, Muss Juka, Ministri P. të Mbrendshme, Kol Thaqi, Ministri i Financave, Faik Shatku, Ministri i Arsimit, Terenc Toçi, Ministri Ekonomis Kombtare, pati në bisedim shkresën Nr. 9264/II ex. 36 datë 7.VII-1937 të Ministris së P. të Mbrendshme, me të cilën tregon se, Z. Hajredin Shehu, ish Kryetar i Komunes Këlcyra, i mbetur jafta kuadrit, nuk do të merret ma në sherbim prej asaj Ministrije, propozon që të përmendunit i t'akordohet shperblimi i njihershëm, mbasi e ka plotsuam kohen e sherbimit të lypun prej ligjës së pensioneve për këtë qellim.

#### V e n d o s i :

Pranimin e këtij proponimi, tue konstatue në bazë të proponimit të siperpermendun të Ministris së P. të Mbrendshme se, i nait-permenduei nuk do të meret ma në sherbim të Shtetit, dhe autorizon Drejtoren e Pensioneve me shqyrtuem imësish dokumentat e sherbimit të tij, dhe në rast se ka gjithë konditati ligjore të lypuna, me kryem veprimet e duhanë për t'i akorduem shperblimin e njihershëm.

#### PROGRAM - PUNIMI

i  
Ministris së Ekonomis Kombtare  
mbas

#### Buxhetit të Jashtzakonshem

I. Bonifikime e vadilje (Kap. 7 i Buxhetit)

Për bonifikime e vadilje parashikohen veprime përf. t'u krye e për të cilat janë në mbarim, studimet, si dhe studime që kanë me fillue ndër ato vise ku populisja vnejne oga mungesa e prodhit. Tue pasë për bazë këtë parim, asht fillue oga pastrimi e ndreqja e kanalit Krasniqes, Nikaj-Meritur; ate të kanalit të Gashit të gjitha këta në Pre-

*Evidences related to the testament of Gaqo Avramushi,  
Journal no.52, 19 July 1937, 3.*

There experienced the development of science and education and understood their value very early.

Vuno is one of the villages particularly outstanding among Himara villages. Three well-known benefactors were exactly from this village, such as Gjik Bixhili, who immigrated to Russia and became rich trading. Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he had built a school in his native village, and paid the teacher of this school. He had created a fund in a Greek bank, for his numerous charities for the village of Vuno, but as in other cases, this fund was not used to meet Bixhili's goals.<sup>102</sup> Another well-known person from Vuno, who was involved in charitable activities, was Nase Sheti, who on the eve of the proclamation of Independence, deposited money in the National Bank of Greece to help the clergy institutions of Vuno and the opening of schools in his native village. Once again unfortunately, this money would not be used and in the middle of 1930s, after several failed requests of the Vuno people to possess the property, this issue was left unresolved.<sup>103</sup> Jani Dhima was another Himara son, who through his testament dedicated his wealth of 80,000 gold francs deposited in the National Bank of Greece to charitable activities in Himara focusing on education. But the testament disappeared, and his wealth was expropriated in order to hinder the development of education in this part of Albania.<sup>104</sup>

#### **1.4.5 Region of Berati**

The region of Berati had also a number of well-known people who contributed to charity in this period. The earliest among them was Abdulla Bey Koprencka, who contributed cash to the development of education in Berati.<sup>105</sup> Another one was the distinguished patriot Jorgji Karbunara, otherwise known as Bab Dud Karbunara, a large merchant from Berati, who put a Vlora real estate property worth 13,000 gold francs, to the service of the school of the Castle neighborhood in Berati.<sup>106</sup>



Bab Dud Karbunara Monument, Berat

102. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 189.

103. *Ibid.* 189-190.

104. *Ibid.* 191.

105. *Ibid.* 148–149.

106. *Ibid.* 148.

The documents show that before the proclamation of Independence among the benefactors from Berati were Thanas Gega, who had donated a bakery, whose profit was used for the schools of Berati, and Harallambi Tutulani, who had donated a warehouse for the same purpose.<sup>107</sup> But Berati immigrants have also been involved in charity, especially in the field of education. Kol Poshnja, an immigrant in Egypt, was one of them. He had deposited a substantial sum of money for education in Berati in a Greek bank.<sup>108</sup> While in 1919, a group of citizens from Berati, such as Azis Pashë Vrioni, Sami Bej Vrioni, Faik Sanxhaktari, Teki Selenica, Qani Bej Zhabokika, Veli Libohova, Vasil Nushi, Thoma Çapo, Vasil Bakalli and others donated a sum of 275 gold coronas to improve public infrastructure in the town of Berati.<sup>109</sup>

#### **1.4.6 Regions of Central Albania**

Unfortunately, and also perhaps due to lack of documentation, we observe that north of the above-mentioned regions, during the period we are studying, the charitable activity falls significantly. This might be, as explained in the introduction of this study, a consequence of an economic and social structure that did not help the development of this activity. The population in this part of Albania, with the exception of the city of Shkodra, did not have the same mobility as in the south of the country. Attempts to change were meek. The population was much more conservative and skeptical to embrace modernity. Here, with some exceptions such as Elbasan and Shkodra, the National Movement and the efforts for cultural emancipation were weaker. This, combined with the extremely important role played in the social, political and economic life by beys, bajraktars and conservative Muslim clergy, transformed into serious obstacles to advancing these processes in Central and Northern Albania.

Under the conditions when charitable activity in this period was closely associated with modernization and nationalism, it is understood that these particular individuals encountered difficulties in performing charitable and philanthropic work, moreover if we consider that these individuals were generally from the middle class of entrepreneurs, who in these parts of Albania, with few exceptions, were completely undeveloped and therefore quite unable to change the existing situation. In many cases they were as conservative as the other strata of society. They lacked both financial strength and cosmopolitanism.

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107. CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, sheet 47.

108. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 149–150.

109. CSA, fund 195, year 1919, d. 31, sheet 1.

The name of Ali Adil Agjah Bej Biçakçıut stands out as the earliest and greatest philanthropist from Elbasani.<sup>110</sup> Coryphaeus of the Albanian National Movement, Ali Bey Biçakçıu was persecuted against by Esat Pashë Toptani in 1914 and left for Italy. Being seriously ill, he came back to Vlora in 1918, where he died. In the testament that he wrote in Rome on 4 June 1918, he donated all his wealth to the Albanian national education, encouraging his heirs to give up the property on behalf of this goal.<sup>111</sup> (Photo in page 34)

This is the first and last philanthropic event of such a degree. It is the first instance when an Albanian dedicated all his wealth to education and the first case when the entire estate was left to national education. It acquires a greater importance when we consider that Ali Adil Agjah Bej Biçakçıu came from the beys ranks.

From the data we possess on the year 1909, Haxhi Ahmeti from Durrës left a third of his property to the development of education in his hometown.<sup>112</sup> Tirana exhibits the most outstanding examples, such as

the descendants of the Toptani family, Sermedi Said Toptani and Murat Toptani. The former educated in Paris and the latter being a painter, they were not the typical representative of the class they derived from. With a much more prominent vision than many of their coevals, they assisted the development of education in the region of Tirana and other Albanian territories such as Shkodra. Murat funded the publication of the ABC book in Manastir, and unreservedly supported the Albanian "Bashkimi" nationalist society. In addition, both these famous exponents of Tirana families performed charity for poor families of their town.<sup>113</sup>



Other people contributing to charity in Tirana were also Jusuf and

110. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 152.

111. CSA, fund 195, year 1918, d. 62, sheet 1.

112. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 151.

113. *Ibid.* 172-173.

për Arsimin komistar.

I lutem kujt do që pas ligjës mundet me i përkasë ndo  
nji trashigim nga ma illi i em, të heqë dorfë tyke u bashkue eune  
ai në qellimin e shenjtë që më shtyni mës me lanë këtë testament.

Në qoftë se shqipnija ka me pasë frezikan me hye nen  
zzgjedhën e nji shtati të huej i cilli nuk ka me dhanë leje për  
shkolla kombtare ky testament s'do të ketë as nji vjeftë, do të  
quhet sikur s'âsht fare.

Romë, 4 Qershor 1918.

Testammedari

Ali Agjah

Për dëshmie

Mustafa Asim Kruja,

Gostadin Kotte,

~~..... MDDHJS~~,

Kostantin Cipja,

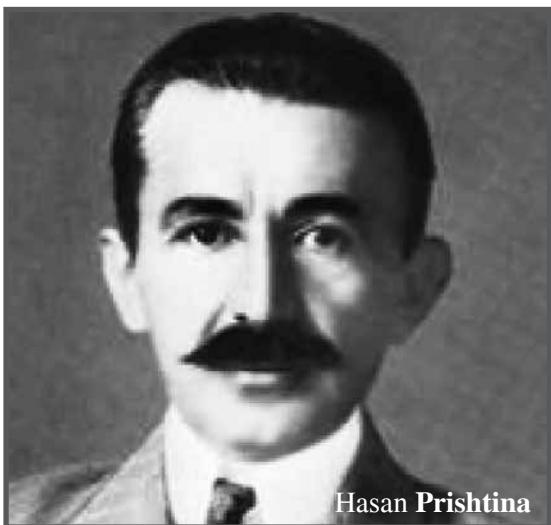
Sif Nosi.

Vetëtohet njësia  
me orizjinalin  
  
sekretar i Ministrisë së Arsimit.

Testament of Ali Adil Agjah Bej Biçakçıu,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1918, d. 62, sheet. 1.

Osman Elezi, who descended from a wealthy family of merchants of this city. Partnering with the National Movement and supporting the modernization of the country and especially the development of national education, both cousins financed the establishment of some Albanian schools, including a girls school,<sup>114</sup> which was very significant considering the closed and conservative mentality of Tirana of that time. While Osman would continue his charitable activities even in the later years, Jusuf, became involved in politics, went through a series of vicissitudes, which impeded the continuation of his charitable activities. Another famous personality is the imam Zyber Hallulli, who, being the mayor of Tirana, opened the first orphanage in Albania on 28 November 1917 with the support of the Austrian authorities, who controlled this part of Albania at that time.<sup>115</sup>

During the period of our study, in the region of Dibra we could mention Ismail Pasha, MP of Dibra in the Turkish Parliament, who donated 2,000 Turkish liras in 1909 for the development of education in the region of Dibra. Whereas from the regions of Kosovo, we could mention the distinguished patriot Hasan Bej Prishtina, who in 1909 donated 5% of the revenues from his real estate, and his salary as a member of the parliament for the development of education in Albania. Hasan Prishtina carried out this activity even in the following years to support the Albanian education especially in Kosovo.<sup>116</sup>



Hasan Prishtina

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114. *Ibid.* 174.

115. Pirro Gjerasi, *Jetimoret e Shqipërisë*, Tirana: FLESH, 1999, 14.

116. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 167.

As already seen, in Central and Northern Albania we come across cases of descendants of large bey families involved in charity. As a matter of fact, they were part of the nationalist movement and their charity deeds were closely related to their ideal for the independence of Albania and its development as an independent state.

With regards the region of Shkodra, the best known family in the area of charity was the outstanding Kazazi family, who provided continuous support for the poor families of Shkodra. Other Shkodra benefactors were also Kulaç Begu and Zef Zorba who funded construction of bridges and roads, causeway repair, as well as Kol Kryqiti and Filip Pema who contributed to building a hospital in Shkodra.<sup>117</sup> But we should also mention the active role played by the charitable societies organized by the catholic clergy.



Hasan Prishtina together with Ismail Qemali and Qazim bej Vlora

## 1.5 Charitable and philanthropic societies

Before unfolding the activity of the charitable societies, we should initially clarify certain criteria used as basis for their selection among a number of societies founded during this period. First, the societies founded in the Diaspora and within the county were largely of a political character. They were linked with the Albanian National Movement, which became the pivot of the entire cultural and political life of Albanians during this period. The charitable and philanthropic activity could not be an exception. In the long range of societies founded during this period, we have selected those whose activity was cultural and social besides being political. Not all the nationalist societies carried out charitable activity. A large part tried to organize armed fighting and another part performed political actions. The selected societies are the ones, which had defined in their programs the establishment of schools and the performance of activities, such as the distribution of books and development of Albanian literature, whose positive impact on the life of the simple Albanians would be great.

117. *Ibid.* 168-169.

They would drastically change the closed and rural life that the Albanians had lived in up to that time.

Analyzing the dynamics of the development of societies founded in the Diaspora, we notice that in most cases they were founded on the initiative of the immigrants, who were related to each other on family or region basis. The goals of these societies were limited to a narrow geographic area corresponding to their own native town or village. It should be taken into consideration that these immigrants usually were uneducated, and for this reason their horizons were very limited. These societies acquired a national character when they were established on the initiative of the nationalist Albanian intellectuals, who had the capacity to enhance the narrow horizons of the immigrants and generate nationalistic enthusiasm, channeling the work of these societies to the function of the Albanian National Movement.

In this study we will focus on the identification and unfolding of the goals of these societies. If we looked deeper into the activity carried out by them, we would go beyond the bounds of both size and goals of this study.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that these societies generated their financial means through membership fees, donations they received, and bank interest rates of the deposited raised funds. This is characteristic of all the societies, therefore this issue will not be addressed any further in this study.

### ***1.5.1 Societies founded in the Albanian territories***

The foundation of the charitable societies in the Albanian territories was not a novelty. The tradition of these societies had existed long before, especially in urban centers, where the craftsmen had funds that were used for these purposes. Although in the context of craftsmanship, where the charitable activity was limited within the context of particular professional groups, they served as a powerful basis for overcoming this barrier and extending charity to a wider context. Such an instance was documented in Korça in 1785, when a number of craftsmen raised funds to open a boys school which everyone could attend.<sup>118</sup> The opening of this school was also supported by the rich people of Korça.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, the charitable and philanthropic activity for education served as one of the first forms of coordination of the charitable activity among the various professional groups, which marked, or better say reflected the

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118. *Ibid.* 25.

119. *Ibid.* 26.

beginning of changes in the civic life, social structure of urban population, and consequently the identity of the groups. Other charitable societies founded during the 19<sup>th</sup> century would also develop in this context.

These societies would generally be established in urban centers or near them, in villages connected with the city markets or in the centers which has experienced outstanding immigration, i.e. in those centers, which had overcome the nature economy, and had become involved in the market economy. This provided them with possibilities to accumulate capital and generate funds to use for charitable activity. It should be highlighted that these societies preserved their narrow local or religious character concerning both their composition and activity expansion. There were also charitable societies founded by religious institutions, but it should be pointed out that they were constrained only among the ranks of the Catholic Church.

#### **1.5.1.1 Societies founded in Korça**

Korça occupies a place of honor even when it comes to the foundation of charitable societies. Donations and the constant support for the improvement of the city life had developed since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and would continue during the following century as well. In 1831, the residents of Varoshi of Korça decided to use the money received by the annual usury of the loan given to the church for the city school,<sup>120</sup> whereas in 1857, the Korça orthodox community collected funds for the construction of a girls school.<sup>121</sup> From the data we have identified, most of these societies have mainly derived from this community. The first among them was the popular fund of Korça, known as Llaso, founded by the orthodox community of this city.<sup>122</sup> The first documented meeting of this society was held in 1849,<sup>123</sup> but according to memoires, it had been founded since 1830.<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile its charter we dates back in 1875.<sup>125</sup> Llaso's tasks were to cover the expenses for the maintenance of the town schools<sup>126</sup> and payment of teacher salaries,<sup>127</sup> and spread education in Greek language to the whole population in town.<sup>128</sup>

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120. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 21, 111.

121. *Ibid.* doc. 45, 125.

122. Iljaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 21.

123. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 46, 125.

124. Iljaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 21.

125. Petraq Pepo, *Mihallaq Pela, Kanunorë të shoqërive shqiptare [1870–1936]*, Tirana: General Directorate of Archives 2007, doc. 3, 27.

126. *Ibid.* article 1, 23.

127. *Ibid.* article 9, 24.

128. *Ibid.* article 2, 23.

With the purpose of increasing the fund and covering all the expenses and ensuring the implementation of all the projects, Llaso enjoyed the right of reaching to all the overstock created by the donations made to the orthodox religion institutions.<sup>129</sup> Money and real estate were deposited in the fund by most of the Korça orthodox community and almost all old people left in their will sums of money to Llaso after their death.<sup>130</sup> The immigrants from Korça to Egypt were also anticipated to contribute to fund raising.<sup>131</sup> With regards to education, this society also drafted a statute for schools, according to which the society had the obligation to ensure the opening of schools of all levels<sup>132</sup> in Korça, and would develop their curricula in cooperation with the teachers.<sup>133</sup>

The documents show that the Voskopoja Diaspora, which held a powerful economic position even after the demolition of town, deposited a sum of money in the Bank of Sina, Vienna to be used for maintaining the schools of Korça. Unfortunately, it was never used for this purpose as the bank in Vienna never released the funds and did not permit their use.<sup>134</sup>

In 1870, the “Vëllazëria e miqve të të vobektëve” society was founded, which aimed at assisting the poor despite their religion or nationality.<sup>135</sup> The lack of such distinctions for the group it aimed to support was expressed in its composition, too. So, the membership in this society was not conditioned by profession or religion,<sup>136</sup> and this made it a real philanthropic society. Its activity involved not only assistance for the poor, but also support for opening a number of schools in the region of Korça.<sup>137</sup>

The Young Turk revolution in 1908 led the Albanian patriots to the illusion that starting from that moment new venues had opened up for the development of education in the Albanian language. The proclamation of the Constitution and the dethronement of Sultan Abdylhamiti II were the signals of great changes to the lives of the peoples of the Ottoman Empire. These changes found immediate reaction in the Albanian territories. A series of education and patriotic societies were founded, among which one can find hybrid societies, where the education and patriotic goals were

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129. *Ibid.* article 9, 24.

130. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 21.

131. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. I, doc. 46, 125.

132. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 3, article 1, 25.

133. *Ibid.* article 8, 26.

134. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol. II, doc. 189, 93.

135. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 1, article 1, 15.

136. *Ibid.* article 3, 15.

137. *Ibid.* 18.

intermingled with charitable ones, like “Klubi i diturisë shqipe” founded on 15 September 1908, whose aim was to open Albanian schools all over the country and to publish books for them.<sup>138</sup> Similar to the “Klubi i diturisë shqipe” was another education and charitable Korça society, “Përparimi,” which aimed at enforcing the decisions of the Congress of Elbasani for opening Albanian schools in the town of Korça.<sup>139</sup> Another education and charitable society of a local character was also “Shoqëria shkollore e Korçës” founded on 5 October 1911. Its goal was to set up high schools of a general, business, and agricultural character, elementary schools in the villages of Korça, as well as send Albanian students to European universities to study pedagogy, philology, business and agriculture.<sup>140</sup> This society was open to all those who aspired to the education of Albanian young people, foreigners included.<sup>141</sup>

In 1911, the charitable brotherhood of Drenova youngsters, “Shën Kolli,” was founded in Drenova with the aim of maintaining the village schools and churches, and improving the village public infrastructure.<sup>142</sup> Membership in this society was open to all orthodox people living in the region of Korça.<sup>143</sup>

#### **1.5.1.2 Societies founded in Përmet**

As previously mentioned, Përmeti was an area with love for education. The poverty of the region hindered the development of education and establishment of schools<sup>144</sup>, but this did not stop the Përmeti people to raise funds for this purpose. In this context, thanks to the support and help of the Përmeti philanthropist Pano Zoto, the Llaso of this town was founded in 1785.<sup>145</sup> Several Përmeti immigrants, who had acquired wealth abroad, donated money to the Llaso coffer. But Llaso was not run only with the money raised by them. In 1847 the town residents raised funds and built a girls school, the construction of which was also supported by Përmeti people who had immigrated to Istanbul.<sup>146</sup>

#### **1.5.1.3 Charitable societies in Gjirokastra**

We have identified information about only one charitable society in Gjirokastra. This society was also a center of patriotic movement in the

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138. *Ibid.* doc. 34, article 30 & 35, 123.

139. *Ibid.* doc. 43, article 2, 147.

140. *Ibid.* doc. 54, article 2, 187.

141. *Ibid.* article 3, 187.

142. *Ibid.* doc. 55, article 1, 191.

143. *Ibid.* article 5, 191.

144. Petraq Pepo, *cited document*, vol.II, doc. 198, 98.

145. *Ibid.* doc. 199, 99.

146. *Ibid.* doc. 198, 99.

region. It was founded based on the Manastiri club “Bashkimi” and it gave a considerable contribution to the development of education and culture in Gjirokastra.<sup>147</sup>

#### **1.5.1.4 Societies founded in Vlora**

The Balkan War not only transformed the Albanian territories into an arena of war, but it also turned the Albanian population into a victim of unprecedented massacres in front of which the civilized world remained indifferent. The population of southern Albania was targeted by the Greek armies, which wanted to annex entire regions of the south of the country. They followed the policy of setting areas on fire and under the pressure of the bayonets and troops mobilized purposefully for this ethnic cleansing, a major part of the residents of Korça left their region and settled in Vlora, where they received shelter for several months. Their miserable conditions inspired Vlora women to found at that time a women charitable society, which was headed by Syra Bej Vlora's wife. This society aimed at collecting aid for the people who relocated to Vlora from other regions of southern Albania and who were living under miserable conditions.<sup>148</sup>

#### **1.5.1.5 Charitable societies founded in Shkodra**

The charitable and philanthropic societies in the area of in Shkodra were mainly the ones founded on the initiative of the catholic clergy. The activity of the latter in support of people in need was comprehensive, and in various aspects it was the forerunner of the establishment of institutions serving such purposes. So, in 1877 the Saint Francesk Saverio College was set up with the encouragement of the Shkodra catholic societies, whose purpose was to care for the orphan children. This college would receive material support from the catholic circles of the large urban center of northwestern Albania up to 1889, when it started to be funded by the Austrian authorities.<sup>149</sup> By the end of the war, this college also set up an orphanage called “Zemra e Shenjtë”. This orphanage was funded by Italian benefactors in general and later by the Italian government.<sup>150</sup>

A charitable and philanthropic society was also the “Kongregacioni i Zojës së Papërlyeme”, founded on 10 March 1880, with the aim of assisting the poor people in town<sup>151</sup> and educating young people in the

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147. *Shoqëritë patriotike shqiptare jashtë atdheut për arsimin dhe kulturën kombëtare [1879 – 1912]*, Tirana: 8 November, 1987, doc. 229, 307.

148. CSA, fund 447, year 1914, d. 205, sheet 1.

149. Pirro Gjerasi, *cited document*, 16.

150. *Ibid.* 17.

151. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 169.

spirit of catholic morale.<sup>152</sup> In 1889 one of these catholic societies, “Rrethi i Shën Jozefit”, was founded. Its aim was to help the street children. A canteen was also put into operation.<sup>153</sup> Other charitable societies were also that of “Shën Rozario”, founded by the Franciscan priests, and “Të bijat e Maries” founded by the Stigmatine Sisters. A great contribution was also given by the charitable society “Buka e Sh’na Nout”, founded in 1897, which until 1910 distributed aid for the poor equal in value to 500,000 liras of that time.<sup>154</sup>

“Gruaja shqiptare”, founded on 2 August 1920, should also be mentioned when we talk about charitable societies. Since 1910, when the anti-ottoman uprising of Malsia e Mbishkodrës broke out and later, during the Balkan War I, World War I and the following battles against the Yugoslav armies after the end of the Great War, Shkodra had been one of the most war-stricken towns in Albania. This was the reason why the women of Shkodra decided to found this society, whose aim was to help the Albanian soldiers fighting in the north of the country.<sup>155</sup> This society was open to everyone and its membership was not based on religion, which is obvious by the names of its founders.

### ***1.5.2 Societies founded in Diaspora***

#### ***1.5.2.1 Societies founded in Romania***

The first Albanian philanthropic societies were founded in the Albanian colonies in the Balkans. An especially outstanding colony was the one in Romania. After the suppression of the Albanian League of Prizreni, the activity of the patriotic unions relocated completely in the Albanian Diaspora. This activity was mostly cultural and aimed especially at the development of education, as well as the resolution of the alphabet issue in order to establish the foundations of the Albanian language standardization.

The expansion and intensification of the cultural work and education in Albanian language were seen as the main means that would develop the Albanian national feelings. The Albanian patriotic intellectuals found the support they lacked in Albania to fulfill their dreams for the establishment of an Albanian nation-state and the prevention of the potential partition of Albanian lands among neighbors. Under these

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152. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 61/1, 220–223.

153. Pirro Gjerasi, *cited document*, 17.

154. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 169.

155. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 105, article 2, 423.

circumstances, the Albanian community in Romania would play an important role and would give an irreplaceable contribution. This was due to the large number of Albanians, their financial potential and the support they gave to the National Movement. In this context, societies having patriotic goals and displaying charitable elements were founded. They raised funds with the aim of spreading knowledge, printing books and opening schools. They had no materialistic interests, and thus, mentioning these societies as part of this study would be incontestable.

Although the activity of these societies had a wide range of aims and their scope went beyond the tight regional or religious context and took an ever wider and more national character, the societies whose aims were narrower and more local did not lack either. Not all the founded societies had patriotic goals. There were cases when origin and religion were the basic factors that connected and urged immigrants to create these charitable organizations. The support for each other and the improvement of the living conditions of their compatriots were the main goals of these societies.

One of the first societies set up in Romania was “Drita”, which was founded in Bucharest in 1884. Its aim was financing publications in Albanian language and building Albanian schools in Albanian territories.<sup>156</sup> Membership to this society was limited to Albanians or other people of Albanian descent regardless of their religion, whereas for persons of non-Albanian nationality, admission would be based on a consultative voting.<sup>157</sup> Another philanthropic and patriotic society founded in Bucharest as well was “Dituria”, whose aims were the same as “Drita’s”.<sup>158</sup> After solving numerous disagreements within the Albanian community of Bucharest, these two societies would eventually unite with another society, “Shpresa”, on 7 December 1906 and form a single society called “Bashkimi”,<sup>159</sup> which would have the same goals as the societies that constituted it. The development of education and the free delivery of books were the main goals of this society.<sup>160</sup>

Another cultural society named “Shqëria kulturore shqiptare Bashkimi” was founded in the Romanian city of Constanta in the beginning of January 1910. Besides the efforts to unite Albanians regardless of

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156. *Ibid.* doc. 10, article 2 and 3, 31.

157. *Ibid.* article 7, 32.

158. *Ibid.* doc. 24, article 3, 53.

159. *Ibid.* doc. 117, 178–179.

160. *Ibid.* doc. 119, article 2 and 3, 180.

religion,<sup>161</sup> it also aimed at raising funds to open Albanian schools in Albania.<sup>162</sup> The mixture of nationalism, following the western model, and charity seem to have merged in the charter of this society, where besides opening schools, it was stated that this society would recognize only the Latin alphabet approved by the Congress of Manastiri.<sup>163</sup> The recognition of this alphabet, going beyond practical reasons, had also a great symbolic value since it showed the future orientation this organization wanted the country to have. As it can be observed, these societies took the leading role in the development of the Albanian society, and this is exactly how we can identify their particular nature and the characteristics of the charitable work of these Albanian societies during this period.

A religious and patriotic society called “Komuniteti ortodoks shqiptar i Bukureshtit” was founded on 23 February 1915 in the Romanian capital, which aimed at financing the maintenance of the Albanian Orthodox Church founded in Bucharest, support education for religious purposes through scholarships raised specifically for this purpose<sup>164</sup> and help the publication of religious books and necessary religious didactics in Albanian.<sup>165</sup> Another goal was the opening a school in the Albanian language.<sup>166</sup>

As it was mentioned above, besides philanthropic societies with educational and patriotic goals, other locally-based charitable organizations were created in Romania as well. Among the first societies of this kind were “Vëllazëria e boboshticarëve”, founded in Bucharest on 1 January 1894. This was a philanthropic society, which aimed at improving the public infrastructure of the Boboshtica commune and to carry out charity only for people from Boboshtica.<sup>167</sup> Only people from Boboshtica or their descendants could join this society.<sup>168</sup>

On April 1 of the same year, another locally-based philanthropic society named “Drenova” was founded, which as we already mentioned, was founded at the initiative of Irakli Duro. This society had the same goals as the Boboshtica society.<sup>169</sup> However, the objectives were not that limited and education was also part of them.<sup>170</sup> Differently from Boboshtica

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161. *Ibid.* doc. 221, article. 1, 294.

162. *Ibid.*

163. *Ibid.* article 53, 299.

164. *Ibid.* doc. 68, article 2, 260.

165. *Ibid.* article 3, 260.

166. *Ibid.* article 2, 260.

167. *Ibid.* doc. 13, article 3, 54.

168. *Ibid.* article 4, 54.

169. *Ibid.* doc. 14, 61.

170. *Ibid.* article 2.

society, Drenova society was open to anyone who wanted to join, regardless of their nationality.<sup>171</sup> In 1905, again in Bucharest, immigrants from Dardha village in Korça in cooperation with their co-villagers who had immigrated to the USA, founded “Dardha charity society”, which would help the poor and the orphans of this village.<sup>172</sup> Joining this society was restricted only to people from Dardha independently of where they lived.<sup>173</sup> Another locally-based philanthropic society was “Shën Gjergji” which was founded in Braila on 19 April 1919 by the emigrants from the Negovan village.<sup>174</sup> Unlike the two above-mentioned societies, this one called itself an Albanian-Romanian society, whose aim was to carry out charity for the residents of the Negovani village.<sup>175</sup> This society was very open and anyone could join regardless of their nationality.<sup>176</sup>

#### **1.5.2.2 Charitable societies founded in Bulgaria**

Philanthropic societies were founded in other Balkan countries as well. In the context of the cultural activity of the Albanian National Movement, the philanthropic and educational society “Dëshira” was founded on 1 January 1893 in Sofia. The aim of this society was to open Albanian schools in Albania.<sup>177</sup> Another society founded on 1 March 1908 in Sofia was “Ndihmëtarja”. Its goal was to support financially the activity of the Albanian nationalists.<sup>178</sup>

#### **1.5.2.3 Charitable societies founded in Western Europe**

Albanian philanthropic societies were founded in several Western European countries. They were generally set up where groups of Albanian students and immigrants congregated. So, in 1898, maybe on Faik Konica’s initiative, “Përlindja e Shqiptarëve” was founded in Brussels, whose aim was to open national schools in Albania and to print and deliver books in Albanian so as to enrich and consolidate the Albanian language.<sup>179</sup> The main aim of this society would be to open Albanian schools in bordering territories, where Albanians lived, and where the propaganda of Balkan monarchies was more hectic.<sup>180</sup>

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171. *Ibid.* article 5.

172. *Ibid.* doc. 23, article 2, 84.

173. *Ibid.* article 5, 85.

174. *Ibid.* doc. 44, 150.

175. *Ibid.* article 1, 150.

176. *Ibid.* article 3, 150.

177. *Ibid.* doc. 12, article 2, 49.

178. *Shoqëritë patriotike...,* doc. 171, 238–239.

179. Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, *cited document*, doc. 17, article 1, 70.

180. *Ibid.* article 7, 71.

Another society, called “Dija”, was founded in Vienna on 27 December 1904<sup>181</sup> on the initiative of the famous patriot from Shkodra, Hil Mosi.<sup>182</sup> The aim of its founders was to print and distribute books in Albanian in all Albanian territories.<sup>183</sup>

#### **1.5.2.4 Charitable societies founded in the Ottoman Empire**

According to the documents available, the first Albanian philanthropic society founded in Diaspora was “Arsimdashja”. Established in Istanbul on 24 August 1874, it aimed at opening a girls school in Greek, regardless of religion and nationality, with the goal of spreading culture and education for all those who loved them.<sup>184</sup>

In 1908, another philanthropic society was founded in Thessaloniki, this important port of the Aegean, which was part of the Ottoman Empire. “Shoqëri e Shqiptarëve” aimed at mutual material and moral help among the Albanians who lived in Thessaloniki and its surroundings.<sup>185</sup> The Albanians living in Thessaloniki could join this society and by presidency decision foreigners could join as well for as long as they supported the society’s goals.<sup>186</sup>

Egypt was an important center in the Ottoman Empire where Albanian societies of all kinds thrived. Because they were ruled by Mehmet Ali Pasha family and because of the special status that this country had within the ottoman state, Albanians enjoyed many facilities when it came to the organization and implementation of various activities. Among the ones known for their philanthropic nature was “Mirëbërëse” society, which was founded sometime around 1908 in Fashnjë,<sup>187</sup> and which was led by Loni Ligori.<sup>188</sup> It aimed to help the development of education in the Albanian territories and to support the national movement. This society raised funds many times for both education<sup>189</sup> and support for various patriots, like Bajo Topulli.<sup>190</sup> Another society of a philanthropic and patriotic nature was “Bashkimi” brotherhood which was founded on 12 December 1910 on the initiative of Sotir Kolea and Loni Naçi, and which was joined by many other famous personalities, such as

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181. *Ibid.* doc. 27, 102.

182. *Shoqëritë patriotike...*, doc. 121, 186.

183. *Ibid.* 187.

184. Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, *cited document*, doc. 2, article 1, 19.

185. *Ibid.* doc. 29, article 1, 104.

186. *Ibid.* article 2, 104.

187. *Shoqëritë patriotike...*, doc. 166, 237–238.

188. CSA, fund 97, year 1908, d. 23, sheet 1.

189. CSA, fund 97, year 1908, d. 26, sheet 1–3.

190. CSA, fund 97, year 1908, d. 39, sheet 1–2.

Dr. Adhamidhi and Mihal Turtulli.<sup>191</sup> This society, which helped the national cause extensively, aimed at opening Albanian schools in Albania and abroad.<sup>192</sup> It raised funds and distributed money not only for the region of Korça but also for Negovani and the Albanian educational society of Braila.<sup>193</sup>

#### **1.5.2.5 Charitable societies founded in the United States of America**

Starting from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States of America became one of the main centers of the Albanian Diaspora, and it would very soon have a remarkable role in the history of Albania. Albanians found in the USA not only a place where they could become rich, but also a source of inspiration and a model for their country. The increasing number of Albanians in the USA would further increase the role of this part of the Albanian Diaspora. Finding themselves in a large and foreign country, it would not take long for the Albanians to organize themselves in societies, which at the beginning were local and aimed to achieve solidarity on regional and religious basis. With the passing of time, as a result of the work carried out by the Albanian nationalists who went to the New World with the intention of organizing and coordinating a number of societies spread out in the eastern part of the USA. These societies differed in terms of size, inclusion and aims. Among the first societies founded in America was “Vëllazëri mirëbërëse e Dardhës,” founded on 1 January 1905 in Boston. The aim of this brotherhood was to maintain the public infrastructure and the schools in Dardha and to support people from Dardha in the USA.<sup>194</sup> The local nature of this society was also evident in the fact that membership was allowed only to people from Dardha, regardless of where they lived.<sup>195</sup> Because of the disagreements that had occurred within this society, “The patriotic society of Dardha” was founded in 1906, and its aims were the same as those of the mother society. After resolving their disagreements in 1910, these two societies merged and established Vëllazëria mirëbërëse patriotike, whose program was no different from that of the two societies from which it was created.<sup>196</sup> This society was very active and cooperated with “Vatra” federation to gather and distribute aid to the poor people in Dardha, as well as to improve the public infrastructures of Dardha. On 3 November 1918, this society

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191. CSA, fund 97, year 1928, d. 22, sheet 4.

192. Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, *cited document*, doc. 48, article 3, 163.

193. CSA, fund 97, year 1912, d. 73, sheet 2.

194. *Ibid.* doc. 23, article 2, 82.

195. *Ibid.* article 4, 82.

196. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 63.

was reorganized and was named “Mbleta”.<sup>197</sup> In spite of preserving its local nature, one can observe that its interests expanded compared to the previous societies. So, one of the objectives of Mbleta was to help Albanian schools, with no regional preference. Its local nature was however, still present and could be seen in its aim to improve Dardha’s infrastructure.<sup>198</sup> This society held a wide philanthropic activity in the years 1920-1930s.

Among the societies started by the Albanian immigrants in the USA, there were also those of a charitable and education nature. In 1906 in Jamestown, Buffalo, on the initiative and encouragement of the famous Albanian patriot, Petro Nini Luarasi, “Malli i mëmëdheut” was founded, whose aim was to print books in Albanian in order to spread civilization and increase fraternity among Albanians.<sup>199</sup> The nationwide character of this society would be expressed even in the fact that anyone could join it regardless of nationality,<sup>200</sup> but only Albanians could be elected in the leading structures.<sup>201</sup>

Another society, “Besa-Besën”, was founded in Boston on 3 February 1907 on the initiative of the famous Albanian patriots, Fan Noli and Sotir Peçi.<sup>202</sup> This society published its own journal “Dielli”<sup>203</sup> and it is extremely important not only in the history of Albanian journalism but also in the history of Albania. It would later become the pivot of the establishment of the Vatra federation. This society aimed to educate Albanian youngsters in the USA and distinguished Albanian students in the best American schools, in order to encourage them to return to Albania as teachers to disseminate knowledge and to develop education and Albanian literature through journals, books and other means.<sup>204</sup> It was open to all Albanians regardless of their religion or origin.<sup>205</sup>

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197. *Ibid.* 64.

198. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 82, article 2, 307.

199. *Ibid.* doc. 26, article 3, 97.

200. *Ibid.* article 5, 97.

201. *Ibid.* article 6, 97.

202. Valentina Duka, “Lëvizja kombëtare në gjirin e diasporës shqiptare”, *Ibid.* 28–29.

203. Valentina Duka, “Rrethanat që çuan në themelin e ‘Vatrës’”, *Çështje të historisë bashkohore të shqiptarëve*, Tirana: ShBLU, 2008, 46.

204. *Shoqëritë patriotike....*, doc. 135, 202.

205. *Ibid.*

# *The Oldest Albanian Newspaper*

*In Existence Since 1909*

*In English*

*and Albanian*



The society “Djell i Shqipërisë”<sup>206</sup> was founded on 19 September 1909 in Southbridge, Massachusetts with the same aim, to print and distribute books for Albanian schools in Albania, and it was open to all Albanians, regardless of their religion or origin.<sup>207</sup>

In 1909 the Korça society “Arsimi” was founded in Boston. It had patriotic goals, but was local when it came to inclusion and the territory where it would implement its activity. Its hybrid nature was also expressed in the fact that it would serve as a center to help all the people from Korça living in Boston. So, one of its goals was to develop education in Albanian and to help all the members from Korça living in the city where the society was founded.<sup>208</sup> This society was reformed on 30 August 1919. It would preserve its local nature in terms of its composition and it would continue to be a society of the Korça people living in America, however, this time, it aimed to support the development of education in the entire country.<sup>209</sup>

206. *Ibid.* doc 197, article 2, 265.

207. *Ibid.* article 1, 265.

208. P. Pepo, M. Pela, *cited document*, doc. 37, article 1, 132.

209. *Ibid.* doc. 96, 379.

This society represents the overcoming of the way of thinking on regional basis and moving to another phase of charitable work, which aimed to seek the wellbeing of not only a small group of people, but that of a wider group, that of the entire nation. In Any case, this would not mean the end of the establishment of locally-based societies. As it will be seen further, the process of founding societies of a regional nature still continued.

Other societies were also established in the area of education. One of these was founded in 1917 from the immigrants of Gjirokastra living in New Bedford, Massachusetts and it was named “Drita”. It aimed to support financially the Drita school in Gjirokastra.<sup>210</sup> While the above-mentioned society had a local nature, just like many other societies, there were also societies whose spectrum of work went beyond regional borders. Such a society was “Lidhja e studentëve shqiptarë” that was founded in Springfield, Massachusetts, which aimed to spread knowledge through education in Albania. This objective was clearly expressed in its charter, which emphasized that the society would try to help Albanian students to continue their studies as well as to encourage youngsters in Albania to get educated and it would spread education in the country.<sup>211</sup>

Going back to the societies established on narrow geographical bases, we should mention “Vëllazëri e Vithkuqit” society, founded in Southbridge, Massachusetts by the immigrants from Vithkuqi. Solidarity on local basis and the strong connection with their place of birth, were the factors that drove these immigrants to establish this society and they are clearly expressed in Article 1 of its charter.<sup>212</sup> The grouping on such basis would be stipulated in Article 2, where immigrants stated the efforts for the development of Vithkuqi<sup>213</sup> as their main goal. Supporting the development of education in the village, improving the public infrastructure of the village,<sup>214</sup> from the reconstruction of roads, churches, monasteries<sup>215</sup> to protection of village borders<sup>216</sup> and even expanding them<sup>217</sup> were the expressed goals. Solidarity, mutual help and supporting people in need<sup>218</sup> from Vithkuqi and welcoming them to the USA as immigrants<sup>219</sup> was reflections of its major goal.

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210. *Ibid.* doc. 76, article 6, 282.

211. *Ibid.* doc. 79, article 2, 299.

212. *Ibid.* doc. 47, article 1, 159.

213. *Ibid.* article 2, 159.

214. *Ibid.* article 6, 159.

215. *Ibid.* article 8, 159.

216. *Ibid.* article 7, 159.

217. *Ibid.* article 10, 160.

218. *Ibid.* article 12, 13 & 15, 160.

219. *Ibid.* article 14 & 16, 160.

Another society of a local nature was the philanthropic society of Drenova people founded in 1911 in Hudson, Massachusetts and named “Profet Elia”. It was reformed in 1914 when it was named “Bashkimi” and its aim was to carry out charity in Drenova and to help all the people in need from Drenova.<sup>220</sup> It is worth referring to the “Bashkimi” philanthropic society founded on July 1919 by the residents of Shalësi village. The aims of this society were very modest, supplying their village with potable water.<sup>221</sup>

Another society of a local nature was “Bashkimi i progradecarëve”, founded in Southbridge on 1 August 1915. Just like in the previous cases, it was love for the home country and regional solidarity that united and drove them to found this society. The aim of this society was to help the city of their origin<sup>222</sup> and to help each other whenever they were in need.<sup>223</sup>

In 1919, “Bashkimi” society of the Drenova immigrants living in America was established. Its aims were universal and were connected to the Drenova community. So the society would set up the Drenova village club, would help develop agriculture, would reproduce land patents, would facilitate the co-villagers’ needs and would support the establishment of the schools in the village.<sup>224</sup> The same example was followed by the immigrants from Leskoviku, who had settled in Worcester, Massachusetts. They founded on 31 May 1919 the educational and philanthropic society “Jani Vreto”. But the goals of this society were very broad. They included fostering love for each other, opening schools, opening a bookshop, delivering free textbooks and newspapers in Albanian and supporting orphans.<sup>225</sup> On 22 November 1919, in Worcester, Massachusetts, “Çamëria” society was founded. Its goals incorporated the education of youngsters from Çamëria, eradication of ignorance, as well as protection of the Çamëria territories from being separated from Albania.<sup>226</sup>

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220. *Ibid.* doc. 62, 224.

221. *Ibid.* doc. 92, article 1, 356.

222. *Ibid.* doc. 69, article 3, 264.

223. *Ibid.* article 4, 264.

224. *Ibid.* doc. 102, 414–417.

225. *Ibid.* doc. 91, 350.

226. CSA, fund 447, year 1919, d. 260, sheet 3–4.

## II. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN 1920–1990

### 2.1 Charity and philanthropy in 1920–1939

After the creation of the Albanian state, obvious changes occurred to the charitable and philanthropic activity curve compared to the previous period. The old and the new coexisted, giving these activities special features compared to before. First of all, the establishment of the Albanian state broke the connection of charity and philanthropy with nationalism, which was the main feature of this activity until 1920.

The emergence of the Albanian state on the historical stage considerably decreased the philanthropic activity, especially in the field of education. By this time, the state was considered as the main actor that would heal the social wounds of the country. This has an explanation in itself. The different features that this activity had during these two periods do not go beyond the limits of the logic that inspired charitable and philanthropic activity during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The widest part of the charitable and philanthropic activity during the last period of the ottoman administration of the Albanian territories had developed within the setting of the Albanian National Movement and aimed at developing education and the so-called enlightenment of the Albanian people to endorse nationalism. It aimed to provide help from the Albanians who were supported the idea of the state-nation. But after the realization of its goal, the establishment of the Albanian state, the task of education and enlightenment was transferred to the latter. From this moment, charity and philanthropy ceased being part of the National Movement, since this movement had achieved its goal to a certain extent.

Once the Albanian state was created, even though the Albanian issue was still pending, the Albanian National Movement ceased to exist. Charity and philanthropy of a nationalistic nature stopped existing as well. The tasks that were once carried by dedicated members or societies founded to support the Albanian National Movement now were left to the state. If previously, education and efforts to distribute books in Albanian were carried out by activists or structures supporting the ideal of the Albanian nationalism, the reason for that was the non-existence of the Albanian state. But now, such a state had been established, and it was its duty to take care of things. It is understandable that there were numerous donations supporting education, but they were not of the same amount and not as frequent as in the past.

However, it was not only the lack of interest from immigrants or rich Albanians to carry out charity and philanthropic activity in the field of education. The Albanian state as well was not willing to assist such [private] initiatives in the education sector. The new Albanian state faced the big challenge of uniting Albanians and getting rid of local identities to the function of a national identity. In the context of this policy, education would gain an extraordinary value, since it was the main peg through which this duty of vital importance for the longevity of the Albanian state could be accomplished.<sup>227</sup>

Under such circumstances, education became laic and was completely under state control. Article I of the law on education of 1928 stated "Education, the education of the new generation, shall be under the control of the State and shall be sustained through its means."<sup>228</sup> The state controlled education in such a zealous way that it left little space for private investments or donations, because of the fear of using them for antinational purposes.

However, during 1920-1924, the Albanian governments, considering the difficult financial situation they were in, started to show an interest in taking possession of the money left through wills of various Albanians who got rich while in immigration.<sup>229</sup> Starting from 1924, the financial situation of the Albanian state improved, but the danger feared from the penetration of foreign education, especially of the Italian education, drove Ahmet Zogu and the Minister of Education, Mirash Ivanaj, in 1932, to pass a law for closing foreign schools and forbidding Albanian students from attending them,<sup>230</sup> which meant the disruption of the financing of educational institutions inside the territory of the Albanian Kingdom from sources that were not controlled by the Albanian state. Since this moment, donations for education were accepted only with approval from the Albanian government and the King. After 1925, the Albanian state was little prone to stimulate philanthropic activities in the field of education, a sector which it wanted to have under control.

During this period, efforts to heal the wounds of society related especially to the urban life, such as begging, homeless people, orphans, hygiene

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227. For further information on this issue see Artan R. Hoxha, "*The Power of Knowledge: State, Religion and Education in the Process of Nation-Building in Albania Between the Two World Wars*," paper held in the conference "Charting the Nation Between State and Society", University of Columbia, New York, 14–17 April 2011.

228. *Ligje, Dekret–Ligje e Rregullore e vjetit 1928, vol.5*, Tirana: Publications of State Council, 1939, 795.

229. CSA, fund 151, year 1923, file 54, sheet 11.

230. "Mbi ndalimin e nxënasve Shqiptarë nder shkolla të hueja", *Official Journal*, no. 70, 23 September 1932, 1.

etc., and they were occupying an ever more important place. Health and the setting up of health centers were also brought to the attention of the Albanian philanthropists and benefactors.

Having examined the documents related to the period between the two world wars, one can observe that during this period there is not just a review of the objectives and aims of the charitable and philanthropic societies. There is not just a reallocation, a displacement of the attention and donations and funds destined for such activities. The decrease in donations for the development of education was not associated with massive donations and activities of charitable and philanthropic societies in other directions and fields. *What we see is that after 1920 there is decrease in the charitable and philanthropic activities.* The range of this activity reduces compared to the preceding period.

During 1920-1939 there is also a considerable decrease in the charitable and philanthropic activities at the national level. While previously, especially during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an increase in the donations dedicated to the entire country, during the time span to which this part is dedicated, the charitable and philanthropic activity would be developed within regional borders. Obviously, as it was emphasized above, people who had the opportunity to raise funds to carry out charitable and philanthropic activities thought that it was the state that should take care of issues at the national level.

In fact, Albanians suffered the lack of a powerful tradition in the field of philanthropy. The western tradition of charitable institutions supporting people in need and the tradition of active contributions through personal initiative of certain social segments for the improvement of the general situation of the society did not have deep roots in the Albanian territories. Even when this activity started to grow, it was developed in the context of the National Movement, and after the establishment of the Albanian state, there was a decrease in enthusiasm and in charity and philanthropy intensity.

The new challenges emerging after the World War I were ignored by most of the society. The private sector action concerning public issues was very weak. This would be pointed out by the Ministry of Interior in a report addressed to the Prime Minister's office in 1936 on the issue of the homeless people and the begging phenomenon. The ministry insisted that immediate actions should be undertaken from the state since charitable institutions were missing and the charity sense within the Albanian society was weak.<sup>231</sup>

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231. CSA, fund 149, year 1936, file V-217, sheet 2.

Even by the end of the 1930s, when philanthropic institutions like the Red Cross had been set up, donations for this organization's activity were too small, not to say insignificant. So, in 1937, the Red Cross budget was 273,000 golden francs, 3,800 of which were domestic donations and 1,200 were foreign donations.<sup>232</sup> As it can be observed, not only the overall donations are inconsiderable, but even the foreign donations were several times higher than the domestic ones. Whereas in 1938, there is even a further decrease in donations, 1,750 golden francs came from domestic donations and 1,750 golden francs came from foreign donations from a total of 3,500 golden francs.<sup>233</sup>

The dominance of regional identities would be translated into a low engagement in problems concerning the entire Albanian society. The state would be the one to resolve nationwide problems. Regional identity and the fragility of the national unity would help the development of a centralized state during this period. While each area and region would concern itself with resolving its own problems without any concerns on what was happening beyond its borders, it would be the state which would take care of the entire country. On the other hand, while different regions would continuously require the state's support, they would do little to help each-other. In this moment, the state appears as the nation's shield and representative, as the forger of the national identity. Etatism developed also as a product of nationalism and a need for the establishment of the nation. Its patriarchal role would be reinforced in this context. *The activity of the state with its exclusive initiative to resolve problems increased.*

But the state's activity towards the development of the society and its progress is not considered philanthropic. Based on the idea that the state is a servant of society and a regulator of its relationships, the improvement of life quality turns out to be a duty and not a wish, as it is the case with the private sector. However, keeping in mind the lack of this ideal in Albania, the identification of the contribution given by Albanian political celebrities of that time, who engaged in setting up special institutions to carry out charitable and philanthropic activity, receives a particular value. For this reason, in this study we should mention the role of the state, which reflects the aims and visions of certain people in leading positions, little known in the country that became promoters of new developments and who tried through their initiatives to face the challenges of time and development.

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232. *Official Journal*, no. 37, 13 April 1938, 5.

233. *Official Journal*, no. 65, 1 September 1938, 7.

State supports or denies the development of charity and philanthropy through its instruments, and especially by law. State, directly or indirectly, is an important factor in this field. This becomes even more true in the case of Albania during the years 1920-1990, especially if we consider that philanthropic activity was very low, which caused bitterness in higher state instances and obliged the public sector to often act alone in its initiatives for the improvement of the situation of the society.

But the legal system was too limited in this regard, and this reflected the lack of tradition and impossibility of the state to become a stimulating factor of philanthropic activity. Unlike other developed European countries, where the state often obliged the private sector subjects which were considered rich, to serve society through payments of certain fees and meeting of various obligations, this did not happen in Albania. It was difficult to do this, since the economic and financial opportunities of Albanians were generally very low. The state officials were aware of this. In a report the Ministry of Interior sent to the Council of Ministers in 1936 for passing of a law to collect taxes and surtaxes, which would be used to set up and maintain charitable institutions, it was emphasized that in spite of the fact that taxes in Albania were lower than those in other countries, they were still high for Albanians.<sup>234</sup> However, the aim of the Ministry of Interior was precisely to oblige the well-off people pay more taxes to provide the necessary income for the implementation of such initiatives.<sup>235</sup> If the state could oblige anyone to give contributions to support philanthropic activity this would be the public administration, just like Ahmet Zogu did during the years 1922-1924, while he was the Minister of Interiors and Prime Minister, when he ordered the public administration to pay quota to fill the coffer of the recently created Albanian Red Cross.

In Albania there was not a good climate when it came to donations and especially testaments/wills, which were the main means through which donations for social problems were made. The testament execution process had many gaps and it was not completely resolved appropriately until the end of this period. There were too many gaps, creating opportunities for abuse. The mess created by the overlapping of different laws made this situation even more confusing and this problem remained unsolved.<sup>236</sup> The law "On duty on inheritance and gifts and the transfers without absolutely no ekuivalenti" which passed on 26 March 1928, excluded from taxation personal estates and real

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234. CSA, fund 149, year 1937, file V-228, sheet 18.

235. *Ibid.*

236. Iliaz Gogaj, cited document, 208.

estates that were donated to the state,<sup>237</sup> while it did not stipulate any tax alleviation for charitable and philanthropic actions.

Donations made to the state had advantages compared to the donations made to organizations or institutions that were not organic parts of it. At the same time the state gave itself the right to approve or deny donations made to any society, group or institution within the territory of the Albanian Kingdom. The Civil Code of 1928 stipulated that donations exceeding the value of 1,000 golden francs, made to civic or religious societies or groups as well as funds used to establish foundations could not be made without a royal decree.<sup>238</sup> Even the religious communities under state surveillance were not allowed to accept gifts from foreign countries without approval from the Albanian government. Above all, these donations had to be only for philanthropic purposes<sup>239</sup> while, these communities were allowed to collect occasional donations from Albanian citizens, but even this process had to have the consent of the government.<sup>240</sup> This climate created by the legislation in force would make the state the main destination of donations for philanthropic purposes. Thus, the state would become the leader and main organizer of this activity, often not directly but through institutions which were under its subordination, e.g. the Albanian Red Cross.

To understand this controlling attitude towards all the social activities and to explain the centralizing trends, we must have a look at the historical situation of the time. The Albanians were divided into four different religions; they were poor and uneducated and their state was surrounded by malevolent neighbors, who had not accepted yet its existence. Above all it was still fragile in the international arena. The fear of misusing regional and religious differences and stimulation of centrifugal trends, still strong within a society of yet a primitive organization would make the Albanian state and its leader, Ahmet Zogu, very careful when it came to activities. For this reason, he monitored everything. But one should be careful and point out that the Albanian state did not undermine the activity of philanthropic societies or the donations of particular individuals to the benefit of the community they lived in or the nation.

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237. *Ligje, Dekret-Ligje e Rregullore e vjetit 1929*, vol.6, Tirana: Publications of State Council, 1940, doc. 57, 152.

238. *Ligje, Dekret-Ligje e Rregullore*, vol.5bis, Tirana: Botimet e Këshillit të Lartë, 1940, article 562, 288.

239 “Dekret-Ligjë mbi Formimin e Komuniteteve Fetare”, *Official Journal*, no. 38, 16 July 1929, article 20, 2.

240. *Ibid.* article 21, 2.

The greater engagement of the state in this activity was also a product of the lack of continuation of the work by various philanthropic societies or activity of various philanthropists. Their actions were separate, sporadic and unorganized and these societies did not have a working strategy. Through their activities, they mostly met the needs of the moment. These deficiencies were milder within institutions under state patronage since their actions were financially and institutionally supported by the state.

The Albanian state, through the initiatives of his highest officials, such as Ahmet Zogu, Et'hem Toto, and Mehdi Frashëri, launched projects that attempted to heal the wounds of society. Since 1922, on the initiative of the Minister of Interior of the time, Ahmet Zogu, the Albanian Red Cross was founded and it remained under his patronage even after he became King of Albania.<sup>241</sup> The Albanian Red Cross would become the core of all philanthropic institutions in the country, such as elderly people housing, orphanages and others.

Beginning from 1925, Ahmet Zogu started to implement policies that aimed at modernizing the country. This was associated with the expansion of urban centers and the phenomena, such as begging and the number of homeless people and orphans started to increase. In the face of these phenomena, the Albanian state found itself on its own most of the time. Except for some instances, as it was the case in Korça or if we consider the activity of the catholic clergy, the civic actors were very little involved in projects aiming at eliminating social wounds that arose from urbanization and poverty. The increasing number of homeless people and beggars in the streets of Tirana worried the Ministry of Interior, since they could easily convert into criminals and disturbers of public order. This concern made it necessary to set up charitable institutions that would attempt to minimize the effects of these phenomena.<sup>242</sup>

One of the initiatives was to establish housing for the elderly and disabled people. Et'hem Toto, Minister of Interior at the time of the liberal government of Mehdi Frashëri, set up a commission on the issue,<sup>243</sup> with the support of the Prime Minister and the King. Another initiative from the same minister was the effort to create the “Fund of the Poor,” which was a project to help the disabled and homeless people who lived in Tirana but originally came from other regions.

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241. CSA, fund 203, year 1934, d. 104, sheet 2.

242. CSA, fund 149, year 1937, d. V–228, sheet 18.

243. CSA, fund 149, year 1936, d. V – 217, sheet 3.

Not being registered in the civil registry office of the capital city, they did not benefit any social assistance. This initiative would help exactly this group in need.<sup>244</sup>

The same year, in 1936, the Ministry of Interior drafted a decree-law which obliged the municipalities of different regions to send a certain number of orphans from their regions to the orphanage in Tirana and to give 2% of their income to the Albanian Red Cross to cover the expenses for these orphans, since the orphanage was under its administration.<sup>245</sup> These initiatives emerged mostly in 1936, during the

Liberal government headed by Mehdi Frashëri, who tried to introduce a new spirit in handling social issues. These initiatives were neither preceded nor followed by other similar initiatives. This shows the narrow vision of the majority of the political elite of the time, which descended from the conservative groups of beylers, towards these sharp social problems. The failure of this government would be followed by the "freezing" of most of these initiatives.

Another important element of the philanthropic activity in the period 1920-1939 is the ever increasing involvement of Albanians living in Albania and the decrease in the involvement of rich immigrants or societies established for this purpose in the Diaspora.

The prevalence of involvement of certain regions in this activity would continue during this period. In certain regions, this activity was more intense and in a wider spectrum than in other areas. Korça stands out again here. This was obvious even in the above-mentioned decree-law on orphans, where unlike all the other regions, the region of Korça was excluded from the obligation to send orphans to Tirana, since this city had opened its own orphanage, which it supported by itself.<sup>246</sup>



Mehdi Frashëri

244. CSA, fund 152, year 1936, d. 918, sheet 7.

245. "Dekret–Ligjë mbi bonjakët e vorfën qi Bashkitë do të dërgojnë në Strehën Vorfnore të Kryqit të Kuq", *Official Journal*, no. 50, 29 July 1936, article 1 & 2, 1.

246. *Ibid.*

The truth is that this orphanage was established thanks to the activity of philanthropists from Korça, who funded the setting up of such an important institution, which, among others, shows the level of humanism and civilization a certain society has.

Another re-emerging element is the prevalence of the orthodox elements in conducting charitable and philanthropic activity. However, it should be emphasized that the prevalence of this element is present only in southeastern Albania. Not the same involvement in charitable and philanthropic activity is observed in other areas where orthodoxy prevailed. In this part of Albania, the orthodox population has been much more emancipated and had a more developed social responsibility sense than in other areas of the country, regardless of religion. It is worth noting that the engagement of the Islamic element in this activity marks a considerable increase, especially in central Albania. The increase of the importance of this part of the country, especially due to the fact that Tirana became the capital, made it more open to the world and empowered the middle class of traders and entrepreneurs. In actual fact, similarly to the preceding period, this class would be the main social group to promote these activities. So, while the south of the country continued to be the main source of charity and philanthropy, we observe an increase in this type of activity in central Albania and also a weak involvement in northern Albania, where, with the exception of the catholic clergy, the civil actions in this field were lacking.

In this period, cities became the center of charity. Various factors, the most important being the fact that the financial capital, which was necessary for philanthropy, was concentrated in the cities, the fact that the cities were the places where the middle class was residing and also the fact that social tensions were present, especially under the conditions of urbanization, inevitably made cities the center of this activity. This was not the case in Korça as it was surrounded by a constellation of developed urban centers orbiting it.

A gender approach to this issue would be interesting as well. Women started to become more active in these activities. Sometimes alone and sometimes with the support of their husbands or relatives, they would become more visible in charitable and philanthropic work. These are signs of a safe movement, however slow, towards the emancipation of Albanian women and their transformation into an important social factor. This phenomenon represents an original development of charitable and philanthropic activity during this period.

Besides this, another element was the considerable decrease in the activity of charitable societies. During this time other societies having charitable goals were established, but they never engaged at the same degree as in the preceding period. Apart from this, the number of charitable societies did not increase. During this time, many nation-wide societies were founded, but most of them were cultural and political. Their aims were to support the modernization of the Albanian society, but not through a philanthropic action. They aimed, through propaganda and various cultural and political activities, to encourage nationalism among Albanian youngsters, emancipate women, accelerate detachment from the ottoman heritage, etc. They cooperated closely with the state. For this reason, the majority of them were not involved in charitable and philanthropic activities. The charitable societies of this period were not nation-wide, but local.

On the other hand, religious institutions became very active, among which the Catholic Church would stand out. Other religious communities would get involved in charity and philanthropy, but they were very poor and did not have the appropriate organization to carry out social actions of a comparable size to those of the Catholic Church. Although it represented the smallest religious group in the country, the Catholic Church in Albania, due to its tradition and its institutions created long time ago to carry out such activities, as well as the full and universal support from Vatican, which considered Albania as an area of special interest to conduct missionary work, would stay in the vanguard of this charitable and philanthropic activity.

## **2.2 Famous philanthropists and benefactors in 1920–1939**

### ***2.2.1 Charity and philanthropy in the region of Korça***

Between the two world wars, Korça continued to be one of the major economic and cultural centers of the country and certainly the main center of social activity in Albania. Korça continued to be the charitable and philanthropic activity center in the country even during this period. Differently from the other two big centers, Shkodra and Tirana, where the champions of these activities were the catholic clergy and state institutions respectively, this activity in Korça was conducted exclusively by private individuals and civil associations. Although not with the same intensity as in the preceding period, immigrants continued to be active in the region of Korça, and they did good philanthropic work, through personal initiatives or charitable associations.

The charitable and philanthropic activity conducted by the resident people of Korça is of the same size, or maybe even greater than the activity conducted by the Diaspora from this region. Even in this case there is a number of names we can mention. An example would be the senator, Vangjel Turtulli, who supported financially the weddings/marriages of poor girls from Korça and left in his will 10,000 Albanian francs to the state hospital of Korça.<sup>247</sup> It is also worth mentioning Dervish Bektashi, from Panariti, who built numerous drinking fountains, wells and bridges in the area of Tomorrica and Skrapari. In 1928, he started the construction of the road that would connect Tomorrica with Dardha.<sup>248</sup> These constructions were very important in a country like Albania, which had very few roads and had limited communication because of this. The roads and bridges he constructed would help the development of the region of Skrapari, as they would connect it with the main economic and cultural center of southern Albania.

Other less known cases are those of Niko Gjinikasi, who left part of his heritage to various charities,<sup>249</sup> Vasil Kondi, who left his house in Bradavica village to the Ministry of Education to convert it into a school,<sup>250</sup> and Petro Prodani and Sejfulla Maluka, from Erseka, who gave away land of 8 dynym to set up schools in this town.<sup>251</sup>

However, the most outstanding example is Thoma Konstandin Turtulli, who can certainly be considered the greatest Albanian philanthropist. Born in the city of Korça in 1865 in the family of a successful merchant from Vithkuqi who had moved to Korça, Thoma traded since young age, together with his father. Having special entrepreneurial, Thoma and his father extended their activity in many cities in Albania and other territories in the Balkans, such as Manastir and Thessaloniki.<sup>252</sup> Although not educated, Thoma became involved in the Albanian Movement during the tumultuous years 1912-1920 and later he was engaged even in the political life of Korça, these being activities in which the entire Turtulli family was involved.<sup>253</sup>

Thus, it was the entire Turtulli family, not only Thoma, who became involved in philanthropic activity. Since 1921, Athina Turtulli, Thoma's wife, financially supported the orphanage of Korça. It is that year that

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247. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 88.

248. *Ibid.* 94.

249. *Ibid.* 88.

250. *Ibid.* 93.

251. *Ibid.*

252. *Ibid.* 73.

253. *Ibid.* 74.

his philanthropic activity would start.<sup>254</sup> In 1924, after the municipality of Korça had failed to collect funds from the government to build a new library for the city, Thoma Turtulli would provide all the necessary money to achieve this goal.<sup>255</sup> For this gesture, he was bestowed by the President of the Republic of Albania, Ahmet Zogu, the Order of Commander of Skanderbeg.<sup>256</sup> He would also finance the reconstruction of this library after it was damaged by the 1931 earthquake in Korça.<sup>257</sup>

Thoma Turtulli's family gave another outstanding contribution to the setting up of the new orphanage in the city. The old building, where the

American Red Cross had opened Korça's orphanage in December 1919, did not meet the criteria anymore. Grigor Turtulli's widow, Erasti Turtulli, promised in 1930 to cover the expenses for buying the land and constructing the new building.<sup>258</sup> Within a year the orphanage was ready and orphans from all the Albanian territories were moved there.<sup>259</sup> Whereas in 1932, Thoma Turtulli promised to the Albanian state authorities that he would build a hospital in Korça, whose construction

would start in 1933 and would finish in 1934.<sup>260</sup> When the construction was over, Thoma's wife, Athina Turtulli, also bought a coal-furnace to heat up the interior of the hospital during winter.<sup>261</sup>

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254. *Ibid.*

255. *Ibid.* 75.

256. *Ibid.* 77.

257. *Ibid.* 77–78.

258. *Ibid.* 79.

259. *Ibid.* 80.

260. *Ibid.* 80–81.

261. *Ibid.* 82.



Thoma and Athina Turtulli



The philanthropic activity of Thoma Turtulli did not end here. He funded the completion of Shën Gjergji Cathedral<sup>262</sup> as well as the construction of the Lyceum of Korça and the Industrial School of Korça. The latter was built in his wife's name, for which she was bestowed by King Zogu the Order of Skanderbeg.<sup>263</sup> All these important activities, not only in the area of Korça, would be completed thanks to the financial support of this great philanthropist. His philanthropic activity would end only because of his death in 1937.<sup>264</sup>

A series of philanthropic societies were established in the region of Korça during this period. Such societies were established especially in the urban areas surrounding Korça. Such societies were Qyteti in Mborje, Përparimi in Borova, Shpresa in Boboshtica, Shpresa in

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262. *Ibid.* 83.

263. *Ibid.*

264. *Ibid.* 84.

Dardha, Djalëria in Polena, Rilindja in Voskopoja, Çardhaku in Dishnica, Rilindja in Bradavica and others. These societies were of a local nature and their foundation came as a result of the need and wish that the residents of these villages had to maintain the public infrastructure of their villages, as well as to keep alive the solidarity with each other. So, the charter of the “Përparimi” society in Borova village, founded in 1925, stated that its goal was to strengthen the village fund and community, to build everything the village needed and to help, whenever there was a need, the people in need in the village.<sup>265</sup>

Such societies were founded even in the city of Korça on the initiative of the Prefect of Korça, Ismet Kryeziu, who had philanthropic goals in the field of education. The Albanian branch of the Albanian federation Vatra was located in Korça, too. This branch was much engaged in charitable activities. Its contribution was particularly visible by the end of 1920 and beginning of 1921 helping the population of the regions of Tepelena and Elbasani, which was affected by the powerful earthquake that hit southern and central Albania by the end of 1920.<sup>266</sup>

Young girls and women from Korça were very active and they founded a series of societies. So, in June 1921, the girls of Korça founded the charitable society “Civilizimi”, which aimed at assisting the poor students of the region of Korça materially.<sup>267</sup> The female charitable association Përlindja was founded in Korça in 1920. But because of the conflicts within this society, it was divided into two other societies created in 1922 in this city, that were Përlindja Shqiptare headed by Evanthy Kota<sup>268</sup> and Rilindja headed by Helidiona Falli.<sup>269</sup> These societies carried a very intensive philanthropic activity. So in 1923 the society “Rilindja” would donate 500 drachmas to the Military Hospital and would deliver aid to poor Muslim women on Eid al-Fitr.<sup>270</sup> This society was engaged in organizing lotteries to increase the income of its coffer to later conduct charitable activity.<sup>271</sup>

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265. Statute of *Përparimi i Katundit Borovë Charity Society*, Korçë: A. A. Vangjeli, 1926, article 2, 4.

266. CSA, fund 97, year 1920, d. 28, sheet 1.

267. CSA, fund 447, year 1921, d. 125, sheet 1.

268. CSA, fund 447, year 1924, d. 127, sheet 1.

269. CSA, fund 447, year 1924, d. 128, sheet 2.

270. Helidhona Falli, “Drejtitorit gazetës ‘Shqiptari i Amerikës’ Këtu”, *Shqiptari i Amerikës*, no. 33, 2 June 1923, 7.

271. Helidhona Falli, “Lajmërim”, *Shqiptari i Amerikës*, no. 42, 11 August 1923, 6.

However, among the charitable women societies, “Gruaja shqiptare” society would become famous. It conducted a wide charitable activity for the people in need. Other activities that went beyond the classical forms of the philanthropic activity discussed so far, through which funds were raised, were conducted in Korça. Such activities were also ball parties, where participants donated money for philanthropic purposes, as well as concerts and plays, the gains of which were used for philanthropic purposes. In the context of collective contributions of communities, we should mention that in the region of Korça, in the 1920s, schools were built in the villages with own residents' money and work was carried out aiming at the education of the children without waiting for the help of the poor Albanian state. One example was that of Polena village, whose residents raised 500 napoleons for building a modern girls school.<sup>272</sup>

## ***2.2.2 Charity and philanthropy in the regions of Vlora, Berati and Gjirokastra***

Although of a much lower level than Korça, Vlora also carried out charitable and philanthropic activity in the period between the two world wars. This activity was conducted in the southeastern part of the country, through initiatives of specific individuals as well as through the action of charitable societies. The greatest person from Vlora involved in charity was Neshat Bej Vlora. Through the donations he made, he supported education in particular.<sup>273</sup> In his testament he left part of his fortune for charitable activities in Vlora and allocated a fund to send youngsters from Vlora to study at university. A foundation was created for this purpose, but only few youngsters were sent to study since the majority of the funds were appropriated by the Islamic Community.<sup>274</sup>

Another case is that of Xhiko Bako, a widow of the Xhyheri family, who donated plots of land to be used for education purposes, including female education, but just like in the case of Neshat Bej Vlora, they were appropriated by the Islamic Community, which did not allow their use as owners had intended it.<sup>275</sup> Another woman from Vlora that carried out charitable work was Haxho Alikaj from Kuçi village, who financed the establishment of the school in her village and a series of other activities of public benefit.<sup>276</sup> In 1923, “Mirëbërëse” society was founded in Vlora, which aimed at helping people in need, but nothing is known

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272. CSA, year 195, year 1926, d. 25, sheet 212.

273. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 183.

274. *Ibid.* 185.

275. *Ibid.* 184–185.

276. *Ibid.* 186–187.

about its activity, whereas in 1933, in Vuno village in the region of Vlora, the charitable society “Viro” was founded, which aimed at building the village aqueduct through the funds raised by the residents and immigrants from this village.<sup>277</sup> It is also worth mentioning the 150,000 Italian liras that Vakëfi of Vlora donated in 1924 to build the high school in Uji i Ftohtë in Vlora.<sup>278</sup>

Even in Berati, the charitable activity in the period under study has left more traces than in the period preceding it. In this old city with an outstanding identity, a series of charitable societies were founded, which would correspond even to the sub-identities cultivated in the city, expressed above all in the separation of neighborhoods. So, in every neighborhood of Berati in the years 1920-1930s there was one such society, which dealt mainly with the maintenance of the neighborhood and helping the poor. We have information only on some of these societies. According to the information we have, a society called “Vëllazëria Mirëbërëse”, headed by Zau Gallani had been established in Berati at least since 1922. Its structure indicates that the members were all orthodox.<sup>279</sup>

Considering the urban organization of old Albanian cities, whose neighborhood division was performed along religious lines, we believe that potentially this was a charitable society of one of the neighborhoods of Berati. “Bashkimi” charitable society of Gorica neighborhood was created in July 1925. Its aim was to help the poor of the neighborhood in cases of death and marriages, as well as to support the education of children in schools.<sup>280</sup> In June 1929, the charitable society “Djersa” of the Vakëf neighborhood was founded, which aimed at helping the poor girls of the neighborhood with their dowries, paving an important road of the city and providing electric lighting in the neighborhood.<sup>281</sup> As you can see, these are societies of a corporation nature. They are closed and it is obvious that they are an extension of the functions the craftsmen once had. These charitable societies show how well the rufet mentality had survived in a city with a history strongly rooted in the soul of its residents. However, this atmosphere was changing even in Berati.

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277. CSA, fund 447, year 1935, d. 225, sheet 1.

278. CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 30, sheet 223.

279. Kristo Guxhamana, “Mbledhja e Shoqërisë ‘Vëllazëria Mirëbërëse’ në Berat”, *Shqiptari i Amerikës*, no. 20, 3 March 1923, 6.

280. CSA, fund 447, year 1930, d. 282, sheet 2–3.

281. CSA, fund 447, year 1929, d. 75, sheet 1–2.

From what we can understand from our sources, efforts had started in this city to unite these associations, which could do little as they were small and numerous, into a wide society that would cover entire Berati with its activity. We do not know anything yet about the results of these efforts. In the region of Berati of that time, the charitable activity of a collective nature was seen even in rural areas as it was the case of opening a school in 1926 in the Seman village in Fier with the money raised in the villages of Seman, Raman and Sheq Marinas for the children of these villages.<sup>282</sup>

Even in Gjirokastra one finds societies with charitable goals, but until now, we have data about only one of them, which was the Gjirokastra women society “Përmirësimi”. This society, besides aiming at improving the social situation and emancipation of women of that region, also aimed at protecting, educating and training the orphan girls from Gjirokastra for a civilized life.<sup>283</sup>

### ***2.2.3 Philanthropists and benefactors from the region of Elbasan***

In the period between the two world wars, numerous outstanding philanthropists emerged. Being a famous trading center and having a key position, in the center of Albania and along the Shkumbini River, this city connected the south with the north of the country, and its east with the west. The well-known civil and education-loving traditions, as well as the empowerment of the Christian and Islamic middle class of merchants made this city open to the overall influence coming from inside and outside the country. This special position of Elbasani would be reflected in the charitable activity as well.

Among the most outstanding philanthropists that emerged during the period under study, we will mention three of them: Nazif Baholli, Rrapush Demeti and Suljeman Domi.

Nazif Baholli, a well-known merchant from Elbasani, built the city's library.<sup>284</sup> With such a major contribution to his own community, he became part of the well-known philanthropists of this city, as he built the place where, besides school, knowledge is born and change starts.

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282. CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, sheet 31–33.

283. CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 127, sheet 3.

284. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 159.

Rrapush Demeti is another philanthropist from Elbasani. He donated most of his wealth for the development of education in the city of Elbasani and planned to use his fortune to support the poor students from Elbasani. He, as a knowledge-loving man, had a large personal library, which he donated to the library of Elbasani.<sup>285</sup>

Last but not least, Suljeman Domi is another important philanthropist. Born in 1884 in a family of merchants from Elbasani, he was at the time one of the richest persons in Albania. The branches of his society had spread all over the most important cities of Albania and even to Greece and Italy. Suljeman Domi regularly conducted charitable activity towards the groups in need and the poor in the city of Elbasani. He supported the development of education by helping the Lyceum of Korça and schools in Elbasani materially.<sup>286</sup>

Another case worth mentioning is the contribution the people of Elbasani and the sub-prefecture of Peqini in 1922 to set up the Technical School of Tirana. Because of its high cost, the Albanian government extended an appeal to all the Albanians to help to set up this school, which would serve as a cradle of Albania's progress. The people of Elbasani immediately responded to this appeal. The municipality of Elbasani raised 279 golden francs<sup>287</sup> whereas the sub-prefecture of Peqini raised 1,200 golden francs.<sup>288</sup>

#### ***2.2.4 Philanthropists and benefactors from the region of Tirana***

During this period, numerous philanthropists and benefactors emerged in Albanian territories. Among them we can mention Hamide Toptani, who left in 1923 in her will an amount of money to the poor living in the capital city,<sup>289</sup> or Sadik Numani, who in 1937, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of Independence, donated his house to the Albanian Red Cross to use it for its needs.<sup>290</sup> Another charitable person was Hysen Nikolica, born in Kolonja but living in Tirana, who together with his wife, Zyrha, donated in 1936, 20,000 golden francs to build a kindergarten.<sup>291</sup>

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285. *Ibid.* 166.

286. *Ibid.* 163–164.

287. CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet 286.

288. *Ibid.* sheet 287.

289. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 176.

290. *Ibid.* 181.

291. *Ibid.* 180.

The most outstanding philanthropist from Tirana was Imam Hasan Vogli, who conducted his philanthropic activity exactly during this period. Besides the wide contribution in the political and educational life, before dying, he donated part of his wealth to the Albanian Red Cross. This fortune consisted of 638 olive trees in a village in Tirana, which provided the Red Cross with a major income to cover important expenses for its philanthropic activity.<sup>292</sup>

Although not from Tirana and in spite of his personality and controversial activity, we thought to include Ahmet Zogu in the list of philanthropists from the region of Tirana because he conducted this activity during his stay in Tirana, initially as one of the most powerful people in the country and then as the head of the country for 14 years. Ahmet Zogu, mostly known for his political career full of vicissitudes, subject of extensive debates regarding the role he had in building and modernizing the Albanian state and in the internal and external policies, has never been seen from a charity angle.

The truth is that Ahmet Zogu has been a “waster” of the state budget, well-known for his fanciness and extreme luxury surrounding him, in spite of the fact that he was the king of a small and poor country. But within the activity of this complex figure, it is also hidden the donor and the charitable person, whose final intention was the modernization of Albania. This is the reason why we decided to include him in the list of Albanian benefactors and philanthropists, since aim and action are closely connected and inseparable in the evaluation of these activities. Seen from this angle, this is a new side of his activity.

Ahmet Zogu was the greatest donor of the Albanian Red Cross. When this institution was under his patronage,<sup>293</sup> he gave to this important philanthropic institution the estate of Rreth along with the zoo-technical station of Xhafzotaj in the region of Durrësi, the pine forest in Divjaka, Lushnja and his assets in Saranda,<sup>294</sup> which, except for the latter, were given to him by the Constitutional Assembly when he became King.<sup>295</sup> These three donations made up a very important part of the Red Cross income. Similarly, in 1931, he would donate his private estates in Divjaka, Rremas, Karavasta, Përves and Çakajas to the Albanian state.<sup>296</sup>

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292. CSA, fund 150, year 1938, d. V-51, sheet 4.

293. CSA, fund 202, year 1934, d. 104, sheet 2.

294. CSA, fund 150, year 1938, d. V-51, sheet 4.

295. Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939*, Tirana: Toena, 2009, 454.

296. *Ligje, Dekret-Ligje e Rregullore*, vol. 8, Tirana: High Council, 1942, doc. 118, 409.

Despite the real purpose or doubts that can be casted on the sincerity of such gifts, considering also the fact that the Albanian Red Cross was headed by Zogu's sister, Sanija, we should emphasize that he gave

a clear personal example that would serve as a model to be followed in a society with not very strong philanthropic traditions. But Zogu's philanthropic activity is not limited to this occurrence. In 1926, when Zogu was still a President, he donated cash to the council of the elderly of Kuç, Bolena, Fterra, Çorraj and Kallara villages to use them to set up the school in Kuç.<sup>297</sup> It is comprehensible that these gifts should be seen as part of the carrot and stick policy followed by Zogu, who, through charitable activities, tried to improve his image in regions where he had no support.



Ahmet Zogu

In June 1922, the appeal of the Albanian government to the people to help financially to build the Technical School of Tirana, found more support than anywhere else in the country. One hundred and twenty three people from the city only, contributed a total of 16,517 golden francs.<sup>298</sup> (Photo in page 72-78) The deputy mayor of Tirana, Zija Toptani, also joined this cause, and together with some of his colleagues gave away their salaries to help to finish this school as soon as possible.<sup>299</sup> It is of note the contribution of Ismail Axhem, a protocol and archive employee in the Ministry of Interior, who donated 2,016 golden francs.<sup>300</sup>

In the city of Kruja, which was part of the prefecture of Tirana, the opening of boys elementary school in 1921 was facing numerous difficulties because of the economic constraints of the new and poor Albanian government. The impossibility to open the school mobilized important people of the city to raise funds aiming at complementing the amount of money needed to build the school.

297. CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, sheet 149.

298. CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet 300–301.

299. *Ibid.* sheet 285.

300. *Ibid.* sheet 294.

Liste Bamirësve për ndertesën e  
shkolles së Jelles

300

Nr. rend.	Emri e njeriut	Sasi e caktuar Fr.ar	Sasi e pagueme Fr.ar	Sasi e mbetur Fr.ar
1	Esat Toptani	1.100	557.70	742.30
2	Mehmet Ali baj	440	214.30	225.70
3	- Riza baj	220	69.40	160.60 ✓
4	Murat baj	1.100	239.50	660.50
5	Abdi baj	1.100	530.60	563.40
6	Mehmet Pasha	6.600	3.360.-	3.360.-
7	Zija baj	220		220.-
8	Refik baj	220	132.-	88.-
9	Xhelal baj	220		220.-
10	- Qamil baj Sali baj	110	44.-	66.- ✓
11	Halilq baj "	110	44.-	66.-
12	Mashaz baj Fer Ali	220	87.50	132.50 ✓
13	- Zyber eff. Hallull	110	62.-	48.- ✓
14	Islam aga Petrela	530	64.90	205.10 ✓
15	Mustafa aga Klex	1.100	831.70	268.30
16	Sylejman aga Kusi	220	44.-	176.-
17	Mehmet Begja	132	22.-	110.- ✓
18	Haxhi Sait Beshiri	88.-	44.-	44.-
19	Myslim aga Beshiri	110	43.80	66.20 ✓
20	Besi aga Beshiri	110		110.-
21	Khemal aga Beshiri	110		110.-
22	Mynir eff. Kulliqi	110	22.-	88.- 29.40
23	- Sefer Saragi	66	32.30	33.70 ✓
24	Haxhi Hasan Vagarr	44	33.-	11.- ✓
25	Myslim eff. Llagon	110	41.60	68.20 ✓
26	Muharrem aga Karpic	55	16.50	38.50 ✓
27	Shabon Mulla Abdulla	32		32.- 3.90
28	Sylejman aga Basha	44	27.50	16.50 ✓
29	Haridi aga Furtuzi	22	6.20	13.80
30	Islam Alla	22	11.-	11.- ✓
	për t'u bart. 14.465		6.329.70	8.135.30

Contribution of the Tirana citizen for building the Technical School,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 300-304

31	- Mehmet boj. Myniki	22		22	✓
32	- Sefer Balla	22	5.50	16.50	
33	- Selman eff. Dauti	44	20.40	23.60	✓
34	/ Islam Hyka	44	22.-	22.-	✓
35	- Islam Hasan Demxari	22	8.90	13.10	✓
36	- Hysen Egqi	27.50	21.40	26.10	✓
37	- Ibrahim Kagi	66	44.-	22.-	✓
38	- Ramazan Deli	22	14.60	10.40	✓
39	- Myrtexa eff. Kazazi	22	5.20	16.80	✓
40	- Haxhi Islam Tugu	110	43.00	66.40	✓
41	- Abdullah eff. H. Met	22	16.40	5.60	✓
42	- Sali Pullum	44	30.40	5.60	
43	- Osman Sorra	22	11.-	11.-	✓
44	- Hasan eff. Bali	22	11.-	11.-	✓
45	- Mehmet Bardhoch	22		22.-	✓
46	- Nahmut Hafiz Daja	11	5.40	5.60	✓
47	- Abdullah eff. Gjinol	44	15.-	20.-	✓
48	- Murat Haxhi Spahit	11	5.40	5.60	✓
49	- Rystem Spahit	11	5.40	5.60	
50	- Muhamet Furtuzi	11	5.40	5.60	
51	- Ahmet Haxhi aga	11		11.-	✓
52	- Nusia Nagi	22		22.-	
53	- Mehmet Sul Osmanli	11	7.60	3.40	✓
54	- Abdyl Tufina	22	11.-	11.-	✓
55	- Abdyl M. Ibrahim	22		22.-	
56	- Ismail Gali	22	5.40	16.60	✓
57	- Myrtexa Kata	16.50	5.50	11.-	
58	- Hasan aga Byrrxolli	11		11.-	✓
59	- Ibrahim Beran Tafai	22		22.-	✓
60	- Beran Struga	11		11.-	✓
61	- Zegerija Seit Kruja	22	11.-	11.-	✓
62	- Sali Njuna	22	11.-	11.-	✓
63	- Lyman boj	66	44.-	22.-	
64	- Islam Muilla Nallben	44		44.-	11
65	- Islam aga Lleshi	22	8.20	13.80	✓
66	- Xmer Gosja	44	20.50	23.50	
		15.477	6.749.90	8.727.10	

Contribution of the Tirana citizen for building the Technical School,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 300-304

	u bartë	15.477	6.749.90	8.727.10
67	Tevfik Efendi	44	22.-	22.-
68	Hasan eff. Derhem	22		22.-
69	Ramazan eff. Nyfti	22	7.40	14.60 ✓
70	Musa eff. Mydernizzi	44	40.20	33.80 ✓
71	Begir eff. Kavaja	22	8.20	13.80 ✓
72	Selim eff. Resma	11		11.- ✓
73	Handi eff. Mehmet	22	11.-	11.- ✓
74	Selim eff. Huta	11	7.-	4.- ✓
75	Hasan eff. Bakall	22		22.- ✓
76	Mehmet Hazhi Ibrah.	22	11.-	11.- ✓
77	Hajdar Bej Mynik	22	19.10	2.90 ✓
78	Hysen Mahmud Krojsi	22		22.- ✓
79	Jusuf eff. Xheleku	55	22.-	33.-
80	Xhemal Petrela	44	11.-	33.- ✓
81	Begir Kazani	10.50	10.50	5.60 ✓
82	Ramazan Killexi	22	10.40	5.60 ✓
83	Mahmut ef. Farka	11		11.- ✓
84	Sul Ketroshi	22	10.40	5.60 ✓
85	Mehmet Balluk	4.10		4.10
86	Reshit Petrela	10.50		10.50
87	Sefer Radheshi	4.10		4.10 ✓
88	Ali Mal Peza	5.50	1.40	4.10 ✓
89	Shaban Sul Nara	4.10		4.10 ✓
90	Shim Turku	5.50	1.40	4.10 ✓
91	Reshit bej Mulletja	8.20		8.20
92	Asim ef. Ibrahim	11		11.-
93	Ahmet aga Bylyku	4.10		4.10 ✓
94	Usta Hasan Kurdar	10.50	8.10	3.20 ✓
95	Doktor Panteqi	22		22.- ✓
96	Xhafer Lufta bej	11		11.-
97	Doktor Gurup ef.	27.50	11.-	10.50
98	Ryzhdji ef.	44	20.50	23.50
99	Hysen ef. Kavaja	44		44.-
	për t'u bartë	16.157.40	6.965.90	9.191.50

Contribution of the Tirana citizen for building the Technical School,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 300-304

		16.157.40	6.965.90	9.191.50	503
100	-Kasem Ali Mehmet	22	8.20	13.60 ✓	
101	Salih ef.Osman	11		11.-	
102	-Nysen Mir Nogi	16.50	8.20	8.30 ✓	
103	-Mustafa beg Haxhi baj	22		22.- ✓	
104	Osman eff.Kasami	11		11.-	
105	Treptar Muzhoni	44	11.-	33.-	
106	Ismaili ef.Bakall	11	2.00	8.10 ✓	
107	-Osman beg Berberi	5.50		5.50 ✓	
108	Sali Haxhi Abdyl	22		22.-	
109	-Dhimitër Hobzard	33	20.40	12.60 ✓	
110	Kristi Mima	27.50	12.20	15.30 ✓	
111	Nikoll Nishku	22	8.20	13.60 ✓	
112	Anastas Panteli	22	5.50	16.50 ✓	
113	Kostentin Kasanxhi	11	5.40	5.60	
114	Llak Lim Kroqi	11		11.-	
115	Anastas Lanku	11	5.40	5.60	
116	Santi Vasili Nishku	11	7.-	4.-	
117	-Tush Andi Prosi	11	3.00	7.10 ✓	
118	Spiro Zhava	5.50	3.-	2.50 ✓	
119	Dhimitër Gali	5.50	4.-	1.50	
120	-Vangjel Sallabandi	8.20	4.10	4.10 ✓	
121	Rexhep ef.Dedja	11		11.-	
122	Osman ef.Haxhi Xmer	5.50		5.50	
Shuma	16.517.60	7.075.30	9.442.30		

pyjet shqip me 18. VI. 1922. simu i k. N. 923/E. R. 15. VII. 22.  
shqip Shuma e metme (nandmi katërgind e katërdhet e dy e tridhetë)

Vërtetohet njësia ne originalin që ka Zyber eff. Hallulli.

Tiranë me 18/VI/1922.

Llogoritar'i Min.s.Arsimit



Contribution of the Tirana citizen for building the Technical School,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 300-304

Lista që përmend emrin e shtimitariveve  
që kanë dhënë nöklave për shkollën teknike

	Emri i mbiemini	Nëpunim	Te paguante fr. ar.
1	L. Gamit Bala	Suspektuar	20
2	Salih Cela	Drej. Nominalis	20
3	" Vasil Virakuri	projektuar	20
4	" Kostaq Cipo	" "	10
5	" Rico Koloni	" "	10
6	" Ahmet Fashi	Drej. Shtetës	-
7	" Ilimir Papuci	" Denchore	10
8	" Reshcep Gëza	nëmës	7
9	" Abdellah Basha	"	7
10	" Mustafa Jergani	"	5
11	" Ibrahim Shillgjerzi	"	5
12	" Ilimir Dukka	"	5
13	" Spiro Storia	" fija	7
14	" Fejzulla Gurakuqi	" "	5
15	" qever Lekesi	"	5
16	" Isqui Emrijoi	Drej.	10
17	" Frashëri Nasi	nëmës	10
18	" Athina Cican	"	5
19	" Evanthi Damaska	"	5
20	" Mari Berashija	"	5
21	" Edhemxhiat Natazani	"	5
22	" Aspazi Kristomarku	"	3
23	" Xhafer Festi	Drej.	10
24	" Ibrahim Beruniya	nëmës	8
			187

Contribution of the Tirana teachers for building the Technical School,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 280

N.Ren.	Emeni e mbi emeni.	Fr. arr.		
		fr.	cant.	
1.	Z. Zyber Hallulli.	48.	00.	-
2.	" Abdulla Haxhi Mahmud	5.	60.	-
3.	" Ramazan Delija.	10.	40.	-
4.	" Haxhi Islam Tugu.	66.	40.	-
5.	" Sefer Saraci.	33.	70.	-
6.	" Mehmet Bej Muniku.	22.	00.	-
7.	" Ahmet Haxhi Aga.	11.	00.	-
8.	" Abdulla Eff. Gjinoli.	29.	00.	-
9.	" Selman Daut.	23.	60.	-
10.	" Xhem Petrela.	33.	00.	-
		232.	70.	
11.	" Shaban Sul. Mora.	4.	10.	-
12.	" Ymer Qosja.	23.	50.	-
13.	" Dimitri Hobdari.	12.	60.	-
14.	" Riza Bej.	150.	60.	-
15.	" Abdyl Tufine.	11.	00.	-
16.	" Haxhi Hasan Vagarri.	11.	00.	-
17.	" Kasem Ali Mehmed	13.	30.	-
18.	" Myslim Aga Beshiri.	66.	20.	-
19.	" Myrteza Eff. Kazazi.	16.	30.	-
20.	" Mehmed Bardhoshi.	22.	00.	-
		612.	30.	
21.	" Ismail Çali.	16.	60.	-
22.	" Islam Alla.	11.	00.	-
23.	" Hasan Eff. Bali.	11.	00.	-
24.	" Mehmed Hafiz Daja.	5.	60.	-
25.	" Osman Beg Berberi.	5.	50.	-
26.	" Selim Eff. Resna.	11.	00.	-
27.	" Kristo Mima.	15.	30.	-
28.	" Vangjel Sallabandi.	4.	10.	-
29.	" Islam Hasan Demneri.	13.	10.	-
30.	" Muharrem Furtuzi.	5.	60.	-
		713.	10.	
31.	" Salih Juma.	11.	00.	-
32.	" Usta Hasan Kurdari.	3.	20.	-
--	" Ibrahim Bajram Tafaqie.	22.	00.	-

Other contributions from Tirana citizen for the development of education,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet. 283

34.	- Tush Andi Prosi.	7.	10.	
35.	Hysejn Huqi.	6.	10.	
36.	Islam Aga Petrela.	265.	10.	
37.	Zeqirija Said Kruja.	11.	00.	
38.	Spiro Xheva.	2.	50.	
39.	Qamil Bej Sali Bej.	66.	00.	
40.	Sul Katroshi.	5.	60.	
		1112.	70.	
41.	Murad Haxhi Spahi.	5.	60.	
42.	Hysen Mahmud Krojsi.	22.	00.	
43.	Shim Turku.	4.	10.	
44.	Mehmed Sul Osmanlli.	3.	40.	
45.	Myrteza Kata.	11.	00.	
46.	Mehmed Haxhi Ibrahim	11.	00.	
47.	Mehmed Aga Bylyku.	4.	10.	
48.	Hajdar Munikë.	2.	90.	
49.	Hasan Aga Berxolli.	11.	00.	
50.	Osman Sorra.	11.	00.	
		1198.	80.	
51.	Beqir Kazazi.	5.	60.	
52.	Ramazzen Kellezi.	5.	60.	
53.	Selim Eff. Hute.	4.	00.	
54.	Ali Mol Peza.	4.	10.	
55.	Ibrahim Koçi.	22.	00.	
56.	Sefer Radheqeqi.	4.	10.	
57.	Hysejn Him Maçi.	8.	30.	
58.	Ismail Eff. Bakall.	8.	10.	
59.	Islam Aga Lleshi.	13.	80.	
60.	Bajram Struga.	11.	00.	
61.	Mahmud Eff. Parka.	1285.	40.	
62.	Nikoll Nishku.	11.	00.	
63.	Mustafa Bej Haxhi Bej.	22.	00.	
64.	Handi Eff. Mehmed	11.	00.	
65.	Sulejman Aga Basha.	16.	50.	
66.	Mas-har Bej Qorr Ali.	132.	50.	
67.	Mahmud Begeja.	110.	00.	
68.	Muslim Eff. Llagomi.	68.	20.	
69.	Doktor Panteqi.	22.	00.	
70.	Anastas Panteqi.	16.	50.	
71.	Abdyl Mulla Ibrahim.	22.	00.	
72.	Islam Mulla Nellbeni.	11.	00.	
		1741.	90.	

Other contributions from Tirana citizen for the development of education,  
CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, sheet 285

The kadi and mufti of the city raised 600 and 350 silver coronas, respectively. The Minister of Education of that time, Aleksandër Xhuvani, thanked them for their gesture.<sup>301</sup> Another significant example was the collection of 20 golden napoleons from the residents of the very poor village of Bastar, in 1921, to open their school, which they wanted desperately.<sup>302</sup> In the region of Tirana, more specifically in its mountainous areas, in the Fag village in the region of Zaranika, Xhemal Ozuni, a resident of this village, donated his house to use it as a school, asking for nothing in return.<sup>303</sup>

In Tirana, besides the Red Cross, there were other charitable organizations, the most important of which was the women society "Shqiptarka",<sup>304</sup> which cooperated with the Red Cross, but also worked alone towards philanthropic actions focusing on women.

### ***2.2.5 Charity and philanthropy in the region of Shkodra***

Shkodra is another important center of charitable and philanthropic activity. This activity was dominated by the catholic clergy, but it also involved other individuals, who also carried out charity on personal initiatives without counting on the aid of charitable clerical institutions. One of them was Tef Pogu, who can be undoubtedly considered the greatest charitable benefactor from Shkodra. He was one of the most successful Albanian entrepreneurs, who opened a chain of factories in different areas of the country. His help for the community he lived in was varied. Of note are his financial aid in the field of education for the elementary school of the Stigmantine Sisters and the school Filip Shiroka, as well as the aid for religious objects, such as Shën Kolli's Church and Paruca's Mosque. His aid was also aimed at many poor people living in the city of Shkodra. Among other things, during the Holocaust period, he hosted two Jews in his villa in Razëm.<sup>305</sup>

The original nature of the city of Shkodra would be expressed also in the foundation Shoqëria Ndihmëtare, which was founded by workers from Shkodra. It was a corporation-like society, an extension of the guild-like organization, but in this case not on professional basis but on class basis. This was the Albanian version of trade unions. The aim of this society was the help workers in case of need, however, its main

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301. CSA, fund 195, year 1921, d. 7, sheet 55.

302. CSA, fund 195, year 1921, d. 13, sheet 79.

303. CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 1, sheet 83.

304. CSA, fund 155, year 1924, d. II-217, sheet 1.

305. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited document*, 170–171.

objective was to achieve their union and cooperation. Thus, this society had educational goals as well, being oriented towards its members and their children, in resonance of the guild tradition that was still alive and strong.<sup>306</sup>

With regards to the activity of the catholic clergy, it did not cover merely the city of Shkodra or areas where catholic people resided, but also other areas, especially in the southern part of the country where orthodox people lived. This was part of the strategy of a social action the Catholic Church had initiated in order to attract non-catholic people into its realm. The same happened in Albania. Through orphanages, schools and various charitable actions, the Catholic clergy aimed to attract and lure the orthodox people in the regions of Korça<sup>307</sup> and particularly of Berati. However, the Catholic Church was very active in these activities and utilized the structures, which were set up by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to further expand and extend, through philanthropic work, not only its influence, but also the charity culture, with regards to which the other clerical institutions acting in Albania lagged much behind.

## ***2.2.6 Albanian Diaspora support for the Albanian Red Cross***

In addition to the Korça immigrants in the United States, other charity aid came from the rest of the Albanian Diaspora. This aid represents the contribution of the Albanian immigrants towards the philanthropic activity of the Albanian Red Cross. Thus, in 1925, the Albanians from Kavalla donated to the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs money to be used for the Streha Vorfnore [Orphanage] in Tirana,<sup>308</sup> while the Albanian community in Skeca, in the vicinity of Thessaloniki, sent money to the Albanian Red Cross directly.<sup>309</sup> The Albanians in the United States sent funds to the Red Cross as well. This was documented in 1924, when the Albanian consulate in New York sent to this institution a check of \$ 340, promising that they would continue to raise more funds to further support its philanthropic work.<sup>310</sup> Even though modest and sporadic, this aid is a contribution which above all has a symbolic value. This shows that the immigrants were contributing at two different levels: first, the societies founded by the immigrants from specific regions were contributing at the local level in the areas of their origin; secondly, the

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306. CSA, fund 447, year 1920, d. 352, sheet 1.

307. CSA, fund 133, year 1924, d. 922, sheet 8.

308. CSA, fund 151, year 1925, d. 256, sheet 1.

309. *Ibid.* sheet 4.

310. CSA, fund 151, year 1924, d. 486, sheet 19.

philanthropic societies founded by the Albanian state for this purpose were contributing at the national level through funding and support.

### ***2.2.7 Charitable and philanthropic activity of Albanian Diaspora***

Between 1920 and 1939, the Albanian Diaspora continued to be involved in charitable and philanthropic activities, even though at a low level. Such involvement was particularly evident in the first half of the 1920s and then it gradually faded away. The reasons for this could be varied, however, they are mainly explained by their anti-Zog sentiment.

The Albanian Diaspora in the United States was the most active and the most organized when such activities were concerned. They were carried out by Albanian societies established there since 1920. With the exception of a few sporadic cases, such as the donation of 1000 francs for the development of education in Albania by Vatra federation in 1920,<sup>311</sup> the other activities were more focused on contributions towards specific communities. The societies were organized along regional belonging and had as the focus of their work the development of the respective communities they originally came from. The immigrants from Dardha were very active in their charitable and philanthropic activity and became a good example for the other Albanian societies in America. In 1920, “Mbleta” society gave a significant contribution to the development and improvement of public infrastructure in Dardha village. In 1922, in corporation with Dardha immigrants of Bucharest, they established a new school in the village. In the years following, this society donated funds for infrastructural improvements in the village and establishing road connections between Dardha and other village centers with which they were trading.<sup>312</sup> A great contribution was also given by “Përparimi” youth society from Cambridge, Massachusetts. Besides helping “Mbleta” society to complete the construction of the village school, which had already started in 1922, this society raised funds to build the village library in 1993. At the same time, Dardha immigrants in America helped establish a theater group in their village, which performed pieces from the national repertoire.<sup>313</sup>

Another very active society during 1920s was “Arsimi” society in Boston, to goal of which was to support the development of education, to help the orphanage in Korca, to establish Themistokli Germenji’s monument and assist the victims of the 1930 earthquake in southern Albania.<sup>314</sup>

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311. CSA, fund 195, year 1920, d. 21, sheet 20.

312. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 64.

313. *Ibid*, 67.

314. *Ibid*, 68–69.

During this time, there were other local societies in America that there were involved in charity work. One of them was “Përparimi” society in Chicago, established in 1929 by the immigrants of Sinice village, who constructed a modern school in their village.<sup>315</sup> Another society with the same name [Përparimi], established by the immigrants of Qyteza village, established a school in this village enabling so all the villages of Dardha commune to have their own schools.<sup>316</sup> Similarly to Dardha immigrants, the Qyteza immigrants funded public investments, such as the construction of a water supply source, which significantly improved the quality of life in the village and also established the Shën Thanas [Saint Thanas] church.<sup>317</sup> Also the immigrants from Vithkuq village founded the “Mirëbërëse Fillestare” society, which established a school in Vithkuq.<sup>318</sup> The immigrants from Vinçan village did a similar thing by establishing a society with the same name, and which had as its goal also the establishment of a school in their village.<sup>319</sup> The Hoçari village immigrants too helped in establishing a school in their village.<sup>320</sup> “Bashkimi” society founded by the Boboshtica village immigrants in America carried out an intensive philanthropic activity in their village, including the improvement of public infrastructure through the construction of a bridge, road repair and help to the poor.<sup>321</sup> Also the immigrants from Gostivisht village in Leskovik founded “Shënjt e Premtja” society in Philadelphia to help their village.<sup>322</sup>

“Çamëria” society in America, which was founded in 1924, raised funds to support the çam population that was living through a very difficult moment as a result of the policies of the Greek state.<sup>323</sup> For this purpose, they launched a campaign under the logo “For the drama of Çamëria.”<sup>324</sup>

This society gave a valuable contribution for the support of the çam cause, by helping the Albanian population in Greece and bringing to the attention of the American public the çam cause. Even though in United States most of the charity and philanthropic work was carried out by the societies in which Albanians were organized, there were also contributions made by individuals such as Gaqi and Kleanthi Qiriazi

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315. *Ibid.*, 69.

316. *Ibid.*, 70.

317. *Ibid.*

318. *Ibid.*, 71.

319. *Ibid.*, 70.

320. *Ibid.*, 71.

321. *Ibid.*, 70–71.

322. *Ibid.*, 71.

323. Abdul Abazi, “Fushata e çamëve”, *Dielli*, no. 2683, 1 March 1924, 8.

324. Idriz Demi & Hysni Sejko, “Mbledhja e shoqërisë ‘Çamëria’,” *Dielli*, no. 2675, 9 February 1924, 2–3.

who donated money for a study scholarship for the Women's School in Tirana directed by Parashqevi Qiriazi.<sup>325</sup>

The Albanian Diaspora in Romania was active as well. In 1924 the Albanian community in Konstanca put together 4000 lei to help increase the book fund of the National Library,<sup>326</sup> while in 1925 the community of Bucharest sent money to the Liceum in Korça and Pedagogical High School in Elbasan.<sup>327</sup> Besides societies, individuals were also involved in such activities. One could mention Llazar Qiriazati from Skorovot village in Kolonjë, who left in his will 100,000 lei for the establishment of a school in his birth village. His wish had been that the interest acquired by a deposit he had made in a Romanian Bank be used for the establishment of schools and helping of youth, elderly and poor women in Skorovot.<sup>328</sup> Another immigrant who contributed to charity was also Vasil Çikozi from Vithkuq, who left in his will in January 1927, money obtained from the sale of shares for the school of Vithkuq and education in Korça.<sup>329</sup> Data shows that before the Great Depression that hit the world in the 1929, Kristaq Naum Dogani was one of the richest Albanians in the world. However, he did not use his wealth extensively for philanthropic purposes. However, before he died in 1934, he had deposited a fund in Vienna for the school in Korça.<sup>330</sup>

Even though this was a more rare occurrence, the Albanian immigrants in Bulgaria were also involved in charitable and philanthropic activity. One of them was Kristo Adham Grapshi from Korça, who after his death in Sofia in 1924, was obligating his successors to give 35,000 leva annually for 25 consequent years for the development of education and charity in Albania and also 35,000 lava annually for the education of a Bulgarian, Turkish and Jewish youngster.<sup>331</sup>

The Albanian Diaspora in Turkey was also involved in charitable activity, even though to a more moderate extent. In November 1924, the Albanian charitable society in Turkey "Pragu Shqiptar," would send money to the Pedagogical High School in Elbasan, which was experiencing great financial difficulties,<sup>332</sup> while in 1925, the Albanian community in Istanbul sent through the Albanian Consulate in Athens financial aid to the Liceum of Korça and the Pedagogical High School

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325. "Vepër mirëbërëse", *Shqipëri' e re*, no. 193, 7 September 1924, 1.

326. CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 240, sheet 1.

327. CSA, fund 195, year 1925, d. 16, sheet 1.

328. CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 30, sheet 1.

329. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 61–62.

330. *Ibid*, 62.

331. *Ibid*.

332. CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 275, sheet 2.

in Elbasan.<sup>333</sup> Besides societies, there are also individual immigrants like Jani Mitrushi from the Kovaçisht village in Leskovik, who funded in 1930 the establishment of an elementary school in his village of birth.<sup>334</sup>

The Diaspora in Egypt was also very active. They gave a significant contribution by supporting the population in Tepelena after the big earthquake of 1920.<sup>335</sup> Among the Albanian immigrants who assisted one could distinguish Andon Çako,<sup>336</sup> Pando Avramushi,<sup>337</sup> Avramidh Oprai<sup>338</sup> (Photo in page 85,86,87) and others. This community would respond the same way to the famine crisis, which hit in 1928 northern Albania. Jani Vruho, Nexhip and Dilaver Dibra, Andon Çako, Hajdar Rustemi and others responded to the call of the Albanian government to help these areas.<sup>339</sup> Another celebrated activity by this community was the raising of funds to help the sick in Albania and the poor in Egypt.<sup>340</sup> (Photo in page 88,89,90,91) This way they helped their country of birth, but did not neglect the country that gave them the opportunity to acquire wealth and the country where they spent a good part of their life. Among other examples, we could mention the brothers Stelio and Jani Kostandini, immigrants to Iskenderie in Egypt, who rented out their property in Albania with the purpose of raising funds for the orphanage in Korca.<sup>341</sup> Another immigrant to Egypt from Grapsh village was Vasil Thomaidhi, who sent in 1936 2000 gold francs for the establishment of a school in his village of birth.<sup>342</sup>

## 2.3 Charity and philanthropy during 1939-1944

The years of World War II in Albania, just like in the rest of Europe, were characterized by destruction and sharp social, political and economic problems. The presence of foreign armies in the Albanian territory, the anti-fascist movement, and the clashes between the different political factions in the country aggravated the situation. The five-year period covered in this section is a short time for giving a description of the philanthropic activity, also given the fact that the country was under foreign occupation. Under such circumstances, the organized social or individual initiatives were either politicized or were quite reserved

333. CSA, fund 195, year 1925, d. 16, sheet 1.

334. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 62.

335. CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 32.

336. CSA, fund 97, year 1921, d. 30, sheet 1.

337. *Ibid*, sheet 2.

338. *Ibid*, sheet 4.

339. CSA, fund 97, year 1928, d. 33, sheet 1.

340. CSA, fund 97, no year known, d. 35.

341. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 72.

342. *Ibid*.

(5)

Listë Shebin el Koun  
 për ndima për atdhetaret që puan  
 nga termeti i Tepelenës



Shebin el Koun	Argimdhë Opuri alhe. Miltiuzhi Touri	g.s. 500
" "	g Th Papacostanti	" " 100
" "	Vlezheri Andresco	" " 200
" "	Spiri Gjine	" " 100
" "	P. Arzamugj.	" " 200
" "	Maria Cica	" " 100
" "	Eleni Vatikioty	" " 100
		g.s. 1300

Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of people affected by the earthquake in Tepelena, 1920  
 CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 30, sheet.5



Listë

Mansouro @

Qëdima për Shqipetaret të Tepelenës  
që puan nga termeti.

x Hedrie bey Yarid	Liq. 5.	x
x Nikolla Karabec	" 5.	x
- Docteur Bamikhas	" 5.	x
+ Britet Cevler Agent	" 2	
- Hassan Bey Mourid	" - 500 hills	x
x Doktor Grifuna +	" 5	
- Arvat Angelopoulis +	" - 200 mpm.	
- Arvat Gouristis +	" 1.	
- Avocat Papadakis +	" 1.	
- Il V. Aramashi	" 1	
Jusuf Begir Picari, l	Picari	
Panayotis Lazaris	500	
Theodorin Agnagnosti	checharis	
x tel-hu-heseni goscorova 2		x
x siell ti-heseni i telhajt :	500	x
x Ferri shagizi	500	x
- Doct. M. Austin Nour	1	x
- Ibrahim Rebtakci	2	x
- K. Konstantina Nacho	2	x
M. Marryanni +		: 500
Michel Papadaku +	1.	
- Arvat David Bottos +	1.	
- A. Papayanopoulos +	1.	
- Maksud Bey Murid	1	x

arreptor P. 4170

Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of people affected by the earthquake in Tepelena, 1920  
CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 30, sheet. 10

## Report

P.8.4 iyo

Aveat S. liatsios	Lg 1.
A. Arduitti bey	" " 1.
* Palmiro Landi	" " 1.
* Aveat Vlachos	" " 1.
* P. Bodani	" " 2. <del>XXXXXX</del>
* Alex. Vacache	" " 1.
Ob. Couladis	" " 4
* Abdel Latif bey Helme Ghannam	" " 2
* Famille Youssef Abdel Razek.	- 500m
* Spiros Alexi	" " 3. X
* Spiros C. Bonello	- 500m

Total Postes au tarif. cinq mille huit cent  
mille deux (P. 5840) —

*A. yallowissi* L.G. 1. Anonyme 500 m → 100 P.F. 5970 50 P.F. 6020

*Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of people affected by the earthquake in Tepeleña, 1920*  
CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 30, sheet. 10.a

No<sup>o</sup>

53.01.61

## N'dibma

O

pur te temurat ebe pur Kalamayta  
te mabetwe te varfor.

Wasta	Z <sup>h</sup>	Vasil Zogori	Gf	900	-
,	.	Dori D. Zogori		300	-
,	.	Ilia D. Zogori		200	-
,	.	Milto V. Gode		200	-
,	.	Pando Tomce		100	-
,	.	Valazrija Xeo		200	-
,	.	Petro Tole		40	-
,	.	Arhimidi Adamiadi		100	-
,	.	Koco Gicko		200	-
Bibeb	.	Jovan Kalapeci		100	-
,	.	Spirio Tocika		100	-
,	.	Anonim (Diamandi Savio)		195	-
,	.	A. P. (A. Potraq Guh)		50	-
,	.	Anonim (Musliman ngaj Morija)		5	-
,	.	Petro Partheni		100	-
,	.	Anonim (Nikola Joanon)		40	-
,	.	Kirpi Klisura		40	-
Factn	.	Dimitri Tolko		150	-
,	.	Anonim (Kristo Nikola)		100	-
,	.	Jovan Mitko		195	-
,	.	Abilea Antoniadi		150	-
Matai	.	Kostandin Zenelariadi (Ternetas)		197	50
Mireb	.	Loni Zogori		487	50
,	.	Naum Antoniadi		97	50
,	.	Milo Drui		97	50
		Pur te Koyer		4315	-

Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of poor and sick people,  
CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 35, sheet. 1

		G	L
Beni-Souef	E Koyer	4.315	-
	Levka Baklava	195	-
	Kosta E. Mitko	292	50
	Dimitka K. Mitko	97	50
	Jean Koisopulo (Greek)	97	50
	Apostolos Koisopulo	97	50
	Abt. Hadjalis	97	50
	E. G. Evangelon	50	-
	Apostolos Kanellis	50	-
	G. Kanellis	30	-
	A. Zigenis	20	-
	Theodore Pantazis	20	-
	Mr Frances	5	-
		5	-
	Leonidas Lappas (Greek)	5	-
	Sebastian Takovas (Greek)	50	-
	G. Liasko	97	50
	Mino Rummelari	30	-
	Jani Ioanidi (Rummelari)	97	50
	K. Ekonomou (Vlah)	30	-
	Vasil Dimitriu (Koccar)	97	50
	Mr Greek	20	-
		20	-
		20	-
		20	-
	Pw Mr Koyer	5.860	-

*Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of poor and sick people,  
CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 35, sheet 1.a*

(9)

E Kryer		Gr.	5860	-
eni. Sonif	Te. Nr. Grek	.	15	-
.	.	.	20	-
.	.	.	30	-
Tatka	Lazo Gjida (Turmetas)	.	50	-
.	Bimi Nici (Oparak)	.	97	50
eni. Sonif	N.D. Economu (Vlach)	.	97	50
Tatka	Rafet A. Xena (Turmetas)	.	97	50
.	Anonim (Anton Takol)	.	40	-
.	Dionis Meria (Koccar)	.	150	-
Chmawt	Trakli Vito (Turmetas) Lap	.	100	-
Tatka	Atbanat Gumpay (Grek)	.	195	-
.	Anonim (Vlach)	.	80	-
.	Panayoti Kaniklidis (Grek)	.	40	-
.	Ylia Nona (Koccar)	.	50	-
ausorab	Ylia Kota	.	97	50
		.	6922	50
Proj. Zjt. Vasil Logori prr ti mesqwin e Klubit	.	.	60	-
.	autar per 6: maj pr 30. Qers.	.	60	-
.	Zjt. Landri V. Logori undevi 6: . . 30. .	.	60	-
.	Zjt. Millo V. Godet autar prit: maj pr 31. Dijmro.	.	70	-
	Lumi e projidrome	.	7172	50
proj. 13. Meannie Torni Gr. 6337.50				
.	prr ti kollar m Torni	.	10.	-
.	14 ti prikuatit Logori Godet	.	215.	-
.	Proj. Zjt. Millo prr Zjt. a. Antoniadi	.	150.	-
	Mbetave	.	6712	50
		.	460	-

*Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of poor and sick people,  
CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 35, sheet.2*

	Pur Dr K. Bayr		Gr. 6922.50
Aba-el-Walff	Dotti Georgiu		124.5
Mataii	Dori Tragidi		121.75
Fayouni	Gambi Petri	gr 40	
E. Sharaway	S. Natze	97.50	
" "	A. Natze	50	
Hirik	Mustafa be Ginde pente	92.50	
" "	Jacov Osmarie	40	
Zubhar	Sadek Moh. chumin	40	
" "	Mumin S. Mumin	97.50	
	J. P. Kruto	<u>97.50</u>	<u>560</u>

A. Tashko. Fayoum 195.

Nikoll Goko Desaratas gr 40

Evidences of contribution of Albanian Diaspora in Egypt, in support of poor and sick people,

CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 35, sheet.2.a

given the uncertainty of the time. This becomes even more true under the conditions when the need for charitable and philanthropic activity was mostly felt in those regions where fighting was occurring between invading armies and different groups resisting the occupation. If one were to help these areas it would be interpreted as one joining the anti-fascist resistance.

This would be even more true if we consider that the philanthropic activity in Albania was organized generally by the middle class, which usually resided in cities that were controlled by the foreign armies. It is true that in times of war, business profits are higher, which in turn, helps the charitable and philanthropic activities, however, it is also true that in times of war, assets which are also the main source of charity and philanthropy, are unsafe. Given the kind of war that took place in Albania, it was difficult to remain neutral. If you were to side with one party you would easily become the target of reprisals from the opposing side. This would minimize the degree of charitable and philanthropic activity at a time when the country needed it the most. However this does not mean that charity and philanthropy fully disappeared. Under extreme circumstances, extreme measures are undertaken.

The Italian invasion of Albania triggered thorough changes in the political structure of the country. Fascist institutions, following the model of the totalitarian system established by Mussolini in the Apennines, were established in Albania and this affected also the institutions that historically had been involved in charity and philanthropy. The Red Cross changed its patron and was put under the control of the fascist institutions. Maja Jakomoni, the wife of the Italian King's representative in Albania, Francesco Jakomoni, was appointed the head of this institution. The goal was very clear, turning the institution into an instrument that would serve the image of fascist Italy and ideologizing the activity of this important philanthropic institution with the purpose of serving the fascist propaganda in the country.

Italians also launched an intensive process of indoctrinating the Albanian population, especially the youth. Many Fascist societies were established to this end.<sup>343</sup> They took under their full control not only the different institutions in the country, but they also extended their influence on various aspects of life. This would find his reflection in the social, political and cultural life in the country. The discouraging prevailing climate paralyzed this activity to begin with. Examples of donations were very limited. Among them one could distinguish the donations of June 1940 by a group of Albanians in Skopje to the Albanian Red

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343. Pirro Gjerasi, *cited work*, 37.

Cross, as a testimony of their fascist conviction.<sup>344</sup> Even though such a fact could not lead us to a final conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that Italy was perceived by the Albanians living abroad as the only power that could unite all the Albanian territories into one single state. Their statements of fascist convictions should be understood in the context of the Albanian nationalism and these donations should be considered in the context of this ideology. Such acts should be understood as a sign of gratitude towards Italy for its support against the irredentist policy followed by the Albanians of Yugoslavia.

During the time Albania was under Italian occupation, potentially following the example of Catholic charity institutions, the Albanian Muslim Charity Committee was established in Shkodra under the lead of Esat Myftia. Its purpose was the support of Muslim religious institutions in the city. This society established a library with books in Albanian, Arab and Turkish language and established also a madrasa school, in which sewing courses for girls from poor families were also taught.<sup>345</sup>

Starting from 1943, the charity activity increased in intensity. The grave crisis in Italy and the increase of resistance would create opportunities for more decisive actions in this direction. "Mirëbërësit e Kurveleshit" society<sup>346</sup> was established this year in an area which was greatly affected by the war and which was one of the main centers of anti-fascist resistance. Among other names, we can mention Fatushe Zaimi from Elbasan, who donated in 1942 two pieces of property to the Pedagogical High School of Elbasan,<sup>347</sup> and Ismail Nebi Sefa from Lushnja, who demanded from the Ministry of Education to establish a school in Lushnja.<sup>348</sup>

However, these were sporadic cases. In general, charity work during this time period was focused on addressing the consequences of the war on civilians.

This activity would increase even more in 1944, after the arrival of the German army in Albania. Thanks to the more tolerant and non-intrusive attitude that the Germans were taking towards the social policies of the Albanian government and its institutions, the charitable and philanthropic activity would revive. The main pillar of this activity

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344. CSA, fund 161, year 1940, d. 698, sheet 1.

345. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 171–172.

346. Kastriot Dervishi, *Historia e Shtetit Shqiptar 1912–2005*, Tirana: 55, 515.

347. Iliaz Gogaj, *cited work*, 164–165.

348. *Ibid*, 150.

was the Albanian Red Cross, and like rarely before, businesses were also involved in activities generated by it. This extensive involvement occurred as southern Albania had become a fighting arena between the German army and their collaborators on one side and the partisan forces on the other side. The consequences of this fighting on the civil Albanian population were grave. The Red Cross responded to the situation by approaching all the well-known Albanian businesses, many of which responded generously in the form of financial and material aid. For example, a well-known trader from Tirana who wished to remain anonymous, donated 80 m of wool fabric,<sup>349</sup> Hasan Lahi and Villa company donated 2,000 gold francs in addition to the promise to donate 1,200 gold francs every year<sup>350</sup> Birra Korça donated 2,000 gold francs,<sup>351</sup> Skanderbeg distillery donated 1,000 gold francs<sup>352</sup> and "Sita" society donated 5,000 gold francs.<sup>353</sup> Other well-off individuals, such as Dylifqar Toptani responded to this call by donating to the Red Cross 400 kg of wheat,<sup>354</sup> another donor gave away 6,300 kg of pears and 45 kg of watermelons,<sup>355</sup> Tonin Selfo and Spiro Truja donated 4,315 gold francs,<sup>356</sup> and another philanthropist whose names is unknown donated 5,000 gold francs.<sup>357</sup> An example would also be the show of solidarity following the bombing by the American allies on October 17, 1944 in Tirana. Damages were significant, and in support of the damaged and injured people 56,000 Albanian francs were collected.<sup>358</sup> Also in 1944, when the consequences of war were felt more than at any other time, since the occupation of Albania in April 1939, "Mirëbërësi" society was established in Berati, a city very close to the major armed clashes.

The aim of this society was to provide help to all the people affected by the war in Berati region and also to the people who were not originally from Berati but had relocated there due to fighting.<sup>359</sup>

Even though these donations might appear limited and sporadic, if we consider the time at which they were made and the insecurity that prevailed in the country, they really provided great relief. This helps us conclude that despite the disorder and the extraordinary conditions

349. CSA, fund 203, year 1944, d. 1365, sheet 4.

350. *Ibid.*

351. *Ibid.*, sheet 11.

352. *Ibid.*, sheet 16.

353. *Ibid.*, sheet 25.

354. *Ibid.*, sheet 17.

355. *Ibid.*, sheet 19.

356. *Ibid.*, sheet 20.

357. *Ibid.*, sheet 18.

358. Kastriot Dervishi, *cited work*, 497–498.

359. CSA, fund 447, no know year, d. 281, sheet 3.

the country was experiencing, the charity activity did not fully cease. Men and women, common citizens and big commercial businesses became involved, which proves the thorough social mobilization that occurs in times of war. Above all, these are isolated examples, which do not witness the spirit that had captured the Albanian society during the war, which displayed itself in three cases. First, the Albanians helped, sheltered and fed the Greek soldiers during the Greek-Italian war in 1940, not being emotionally affected by the crimes that the Greek army itself had committed only 26 years prior in southern Albania. This attitude would display itself more clearly in 1943, when after the capitulation of the fascist Italy on September 8 of that year, many Italian soldiers, even though they had been the invaders up until that moment, were sheltered by the Albanians, escaping, thus, their guaranteed massacring by the German army. The third example would be the protection of the Jewish population in the most difficult time of their history. When the dark cloud of Holocaust had covered Europe, the Jews were sheltered and protected by the Albanians, despite the consequences that the families would suffer for doing so. Albania was one of the few countries where no Jews were handed over to the Nazi German authorities.

These cases of extreme humanism could be incorporated without hesitation in the context of philanthropic activity, as they are examples of the efforts for establishing friendly relationship among nations, by overcoming prejudices and historical tragedies in the name of a better future. This becomes even more true if we consider the historical circumstances when they occurred.

## **2.4 Charity and philanthropy in the years 1945-1990**

The implementation of the real socialist model in Albania after World War II would have extreme consequences on the history of the country. A new political, economic and social system would be established, which aimed at homogenizing the society and turning it into a one color society. This goal would be achieved through the war of classes, which would be translated into the establishment of the state of dictatorship of proletariat, meaning a one-party system, getting rid of the private property and centralizing the economic sector, the work of which was carried out through central planning and extreme ideologization of society with the goal of creating the so-called "new man." Thus, a highly centralized political, economic and social system was established, which kept under control and led every sector of life including art and

culture and turned them into strong propaganda means to serve the regime. This was a Bolshevik and Stalinist type of totalitarism, which was implemented in an exemplary way in Albania.

In a country where the private property is lacking, where a political system is established on the principle that the state belongs to people who have no property, who fight to eradicate property and extinguish the owners' class, understandably not much remains for philanthropy. The Albanian etatism, the basis of which were established by Ahmet Zogu, was taken to extremes by the communist leader Enver Hoxha. In the time of Zogu, the role of the state in society increased, however, during the 45 years of the stalinist Albanian regime, it became an absolute. The state would think of everything. During this time, the public sphere was endlessly extending and the private sphere was shrinking almost to full extinction. Everything linked to the latter became the subject of critique and punishment. Following the principle that the general interests should supersede the personal interests, the eradication of personal initiatives and skills of the individual to act as an independent subject and actor was sanctioned. The stalinist totalitarism banned any efforts by the individual to strike a balance between the personal and the social interests, which is based on a moral and healthy economic state. Such regimes did not intend to achieve such a balance. Acting in a one-sided way and by eradicating individualism and exulting community/collectivism, they destroyed both the economic basis and the values to carry out philanthropic activity.

To better understand how charity and philanthropy were interpreted in socialist Albania, it is enough to consult the Albanian language dictionary published in 1980 by the Academy of Sciences of the Popular Socialist Republic of Albania. What strikes one's attention is the fact that the authors of this major piece of work do not make a difference between these two terms. Thus, a charitable person is one "who is supposedly involved in charity activity, supposedly helping the poor, but in real fact intends to bring down their anger and extinguish the war of classes (referring to some organizations and societies in capitalist countries)",<sup>360</sup> while philanthropy is "the material aid given in the bourgeoisie countries by the rich to the poor just for appearances; the bourgeois charitable individual humiliates and demeans the dignity of the person)".<sup>361</sup> This clearly indicates that philanthropy was seen in an ideological prism, which denied every value of this activity and its criticism would extend to the point of fully denying it, as a demonstration of humanism and a degree of civilization.

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360. *Fjalor i Gjuhës së Sotme Shqipe*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1980, 1145.

361. *Ibid*, 470.

Under such circumstances, it could not be expected that a state adapting a prevailing Marxist-Leninist ideology,<sup>362</sup> would have provisions in its legislation which would regulate the charitable and philanthropic activity in the country. In the Civil Code of that time,<sup>363</sup> charity and philanthropy are not even mentioned. Donation is not seen as an act that an individual would carry out to the benefit of society. The same was valid regarding inheritance. In actual fact, the means that the Albanian state possessed at that time were so limited, that it was impossible for anything to remain for charity. Private property as it was defined in the Constitution and the Civil Code was closely linked to household belongings and savings from state salaries, which were not high enough to be used for such purposes.

However, this does not mean that in the socialist Albania peoples' support for each other and the efforts for the development of society disappeared as a feature. They just simply changed thoroughly and were presented in a different format in line with the ideology and interests of the communist regime. At that time in Albania, charity and philanthropy were replaced with the concept of voluntarism and solidarity. If we were to consult once again the Albanian dictionary published in 1980, these terms would be explained as follows: solidarity means "the relation between people or social groups that have common goals and that help each other, the expression of support for the goals and actions of someone with whom we share the same opinions,"<sup>364</sup> and voluntarism is "the principle of peoples' participation in a movement, in an organization etc. at their own will, without being obliged by anyone."<sup>365</sup>

However, the definitions of these two terms were far from reflecting the reality. It is in the socialist countries that the voluntary work was used to build socialism. In actual fact, this was mandatory work, especially of the youth, to the benefit of the major infrastructural works that the communist state was building, such as, new roads, railways and terraces on the hills in the south of the country. This was a good and cheap way of implementing big projects. The "dressing" of this voluntarism with an ideological "outfit" was conducted in a simple way as this was a contribution that society was giving to collective property and it also reduced the distance between brain work and physical work, which according to the Marxist ideology was a feature of the bourgeoisie society. While solidarity was expressed in the reciprocal support that

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362. CSA, fund 489, year 1976, d. 12, journal 6.

363. *Codes of the Popular Socialist Republic of Albania*, Tirana: Political Bureau of the Council of Ministers, 1982, 115–233.

364. *Fjalori*, 1774.

365. *Ibid*, 219.

society was giving especially in cases of catastrophe, when the people did not sit around idly and leave all to the state to take care of, but people would become one with the state under the motto “monolithic union party-people.” Solidarity and voluntarism became one in these cases as voluntarism would come as result of the socialist solidarity. Such known cases would include the assistance to the northern part of the country after the earthquake of 1979, the damages from which were immense. Thousands of volunteers from across the country travelled towards Shkodra and Lezha to help with the recovery efforts.

Other similar instances have occurred in 1967, 1975 and 1976. These efforts were organized by the state which used these events to serve its propaganda, however the tendency of the Albanians to help each other should not be denied.



Mother Teresa

At a time when that charitable and philanthropic activity in the stalinist Albania of Enver Hoxha was completely eradicated, as if to compensate this forced asphyxiation, outside the territory of the country, a female Albanian would become known worldwide for her philanthropic activity and would become the source of inspiration for people around the globe. We are referring to Gonxhe Bojaxhi, widely known as Mother

Theresa. In all fairness she is the greatest Albanian philanthropist and one of the greatest philanthropists of mankind. She did not dedicate her activity to the area she came from, her compatriots or followers of the religion she belonged to. She dedicated her activity to mankind and for this reason she raises above all other Albanians involved in this activity.

While these people were led in their actions by the needs of the communities they came from, Mother Teresa dedicated her philanthropic activity to the goal of making the world a better place. The goal was the battle against the wounds of the human society, especially in the poor and backward countries. In addition, differently from other philanthropists,

Mother Teresa was not a successful businesswoman, who used her wealth to follow a personal vision despite what the society might need. In actual fact she was never involved in any similar businesses. With her example, she became a promoter of this activity that mobilized and inspired people world around. And that's where her greatness rests. Mother Teresa does not simply belong to Albania or Albanians. She belongs to the whole world. However, the philanthropic initiatives and undertakings which she generated kept uninterrupted among Albanians the thread of philanthropic activity, which runs through the last seven centuries of the Albanian history. Without it, as a result of its stalinist policies followed by the Albanian communist regime, this thread would have been cut off.

As a result, is worth emphasizing that even though the support among people in case of need did not disappear, the philanthropic phenomenon as a form of personal initiative to serve society completely disappeared. Even in the cases of solidarity and voluntarism, they were not happening in the context of personal decisions, but in the context of working communities. The attack against individualism and property, which would mean the curtailing of freedom by the state structures, thoroughly eradicated the charitable and philanthropic activity for 45 years. Philanthropy, which was not a very distinguished phenomenon among Albanians anyway, disappeared further under the hammering of the communist regime.



Mother Theresa and Pope John Paul II

The social impact of the hegemonizing policies, the elimination of private property, the extreme poverty of Albanians as result of collectivization and the extreme etatism stripped the “new man” from the social responsibility. This would be harshly displayed during the post-communist period. Even though it fostered the national bonding of Albanians, the Albanian stalinist regime did not manage to achieve it and more so in some cases it cut off some important bonds of the civic conscience which kept the society united. The charitable and philanthropic activity over the last 20 years would be widely defined by the 45 years of communism in Albania. The visible surfacing of anti-nationalism among Albanians would revive the local identities and religious identities, which would defy his activity in the years after the fall of communism. The reviving of this phenomenon in post-communist Albania and its features are dealt with in the following chapter.

### III. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY AFTER 1990s

After 1990s, similarly to other East European countries, in Albania the transformation of the system was accompanied by an important political and economic transformation towards a democratic society and an open market, the return of private property and free competition. Important reforms were undertaken such as the liberalization of the market, privatization of state enterprises in strategic sectors and the development of the private sector.

Transition and social and economic development challenges were too great to be addressed in the context of a new political system, poor economy, weakening of institutions, mentality of a society that had been isolated for 45 years and increase of unemployment. The development of free initiative established the conditions for the flourishing of many private initiatives impacting the economy growth and development society in the country.

Establishment of non-profit organizations and the development of civic society, were other development factors and which had an important contribution in the economic and social development.

These developments established the conditions for revival of the charitable and philanthropic activity.

The study has not gone into depth about analyzing the development of charity and philanthropy after 1990s, given that this was not the scope of this study. The relatively close period to the time when the study was carried out, the limited philanthropic activity during these 20 years and the lack of documentation on this activity both by the individuals and the state require another study approach.

Assessing as very important the analysis of the philanthropic activity during this time, Partners Albania has undertaken and will be undertaking more thorough studies in the field. As part of its research work, in the context of promoting the development of philanthropy in Albania, Partners Albania conducted in spring 2000 a study on businesses and their participation in philanthropic activities.<sup>366</sup> As part of the study in which 140 businesses took part country wide, Partners Albania identified a relatively high percentage of philanthropic activity carried out by different businesses in various sectors such as, finance, construction, transportation and telecommunication, extractive and processing industry, hotels and tourism industry and others.

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366. Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, Survey Report: [www.partnersalbania.org](http://www.partnersalbania.org)

Partners Albania assesses that the identification of philanthropic activities by businesses and the presentation in a more detailed form would help the acknowledgment of the philanthropic activity and the contribution that the business sector gives towards the development of local communities and the raising of the awareness of the society at large and institutions and different actors on the importance of this activity. Following we have presented some of the cases that were identified and investigated further and the beneficiaries of this help.

These cases aim to illustrate the philanthropic activity carried out by businesses of different sizes and different industries and identify the different kinds of contributions towards the economic and social development. They constitute only some of the practices identified by Partners Albania. Permission has been obtained by these companies to make this information part of the publication. These cases are an added value to the study, by becoming part of the historical analysis of this activity and its evolution in different historical periods. This study clearly shows that the philanthropic activity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a continuation of the much earlier social activity even though under different political and social dimensions.

### **3.1 Practices of philanthropic activity of several companies in Albania**

**General Polymeren Recycling Albania (GPR Albania)**, located in Gjocaj village near Vora, Tirana, is a company involved in waste recycling.

The philanthropic activity of the enterprise dates back to its inception, namely in 2009. During these three years, GPRA has continuously supported the 9-year schools on the initiatives to keep a clean environment, introducing the students to recyclable materials. Each year students are allowed to visit the GPR Albania factory, not only to observe and to be introduced to the way a recycling plant works, but also to encourage children to have a positive attitude and behavior towards the environment. GPRA has invested in maintaining schools facility, for the schools that collect recyclable materials and send them to the factory.

Another contribution of GPR Albania is the employment it has provided for the residents of Gjocaj. The factory is located in the village and it has employed most of the residents of this village, aiming at cooperation and interaction and wanting to have a good and stable relationship with the community residents. In a conversation held with a delegation of women working in the factory, it became evident that the employment of local residents by the factory has been very positive for these families. It is especially important to take into account the fact that all women have been employed at the factory, marking a step forward in the socio-economic development of the area. According to the employees' accounts, on New Year's Eve, the company organizes celebrations for the village children and the Roma community, during which children are given gifts and the community celebrates together.

**Helvetika Profarma**, based in the city of Tirana, is involved in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products, primarily for children. The company's contribution to the development of philanthropic activities, mainly in child health, has begun since 2004.

Throughout these years, the firm has developed various philanthropic activities in a sustainable manner. It has supported a number of organizations such as Fëmijët Shqiptarë foundation, Unë Gruaja foundation and Shpresa për Botën foundation in their activity at the service of groups in need, and other institutions in the events of natural disasters, such as the 2010 flood in Shkodra, where the company came to the aid of Shkodra regional hospital with its products. The support provided by Helvetika Profarma has been of various forms ranging from providing organic products for children to continuous financial contribution ranging from 5,000 to 6,000 Euros. For the company, the main drive to perform philanthropic activities has been the support for people and groups in need. In their opinion, the role of the state in providing tax relief and increasing incentives, as well as the media promotion would contribute to the growth of philanthropic activity among other enterprises in Albania, expanding the circle of persons and groups that would be supported.

**Pegi Printing House** is another venture in the processing industry sector, which has been engaged in philanthropic activity for several years.

The support provided has been sporadic in some cases and stable in others. It is worth mentioning the cases of the natural disasters, such as the floods in Shkodra, where the company contributed with books and financial support. As an example of the continued support we could refer to the contribution to Zyber Hallulli orphanage, providing mostly fiction books for children and the support provided to the Association for the Blind with customized books in Braille.

The impetus to carry out philanthropic activities is associated with the vision and the good will of the company to contribute to groups in need. They are confident that they will still continue to support the above associations and institutions even in the future.

**Mr. Asllan Sula**, president of Santara Ltd. company is a businessman in the construction sector, who has been carrying out philanthropic activity since 1993. During this period he has supported many art and cultural activities and has carried out charitable deeds for individuals in need. Mr. Sula has sponsored concerts of the Kruja Folk Group, has supported the Kruja Athletic Club, has helped build houses for the homeless, has built Myftinia of Kruja, has paved roads in the communities where this was mostly needed, has helped paraplegic and tetraplegic people and has provided financial and other assistance.

The deep feeling of trust and the sensitivity to community problems and needs are great incentives for Mr. Sula to undertake philanthropic activity. The aid he has given to these communities has been and continues to be constant and varied.

**Sheraton Tirana Hotel** has carried out philanthropic activities since the very beginning of its activity in Albania. They were mostly philanthropic activities in support of organizations, which aim to improve the quality of life of different social groups. Among the organizations that it has supported and continues to support are the Albanian Red Cross and UNICEF. The contribution given to the Albanian Red Cross has been in the form of material base and food for children and the elderly. As far as UNICEF is concerned, the company has contributed by supporting the initiative "Albania reads" for 2 years, in a total amount of 100,000 Euros. The incentive to contribute has been the desire to help various groups in need and the development of the society as a whole. As for the form of support, a strong point for the company has been collaboration with other social actors. In its premises, the company conducts auctions and banquets, where personalities from various fields are invited. Proceeds from these events go to organizations that the company supports. Another way to collect contributions from individuals and organized groups and hotel guests, is setting in the hotel hall a box where each person can contribute with a symbolic amount. To further enhance philanthropic activities, the company recommends that the organizations working towards community development should be transparent when seeking the business cooperation in carrying out their activities and that the society awareness is regard to philanthropy should increase.

**Fix Pro** is a company involved in processing of meat products in the city of Korça. The company has been carrying out philanthropic activities since 2005. Every year it supports the Dorcas, a humanitarian organization which works to serve groups in need in the city of Korça. For several years the company has also provided financial aid for 5 children of the church kindergarten, for children of police officers killed in the line of duty and it also provides an old woman living in the Boboshtica village with a monthly pension, given her difficult economic situation and lack of relatives. Generally, the form of support that the company provides is financial contribution. The impetus to develop philanthropic activities is not to promote business, but the feeling of humanity and respect for people and the sense of being helpful to society.

Having a six-year experience in such activities, the company is appreciated by the community. In the future the company aims to involve other businesses in these activities.

**Çelësi Media Group**, located in Tirana, is another company that conducts philanthropic activities.

The Group has set up the Akademia Kult center, through which it organizes annually the competition and provides awards to artists of various fields. The center has focused its activity on art and culture. The group has been carrying out philanthropic activity for about 7 years and has given a financial contribution of about 2-3million Lek, although according to its representatives this occurs in a very difficult social context.

The impetus to develop philanthropic activity is personal, linked to the company leaders, and affiliated with the mission of the Group.

What the company intends for the future is not only to continue the work it has carried out during these seven years, but also to encourage other business actors and organizations to join in the future, as still very little is being done for art and culture.

**Shaga Ltd.** is a company located in Tirana and engaged in the processing industry. Its philanthropic activity dates back to 2009. During this three-year period, assistance has been provided mainly through material support but also financial support has been forthcoming. The supported organizations and institutions have been several, including the Association of Police Officers Killed in the Line of Duty and Zyber Hallulli orphanage. The company executives believe that the moral of society is to help people in need. This is the impetus to carry out philanthropic activities. The company believes that it will continue to support vulnerable groups, but one of the recommendations in order to have a variety of philanthropic activities would also be the improvement of the existing legal framework to provide more facilities for the business.

**The Vodafone company**, in the context of corporate social responsibility, founded the Vodafone Foundation in 2007. This innovation within the business community in Albania provides a significant social and sustainable investment for the community.

The Foundation annual contribution fund is at least half a million Euros. The Foundation announces three rounds of applications for projects. Seventy-three organizations and 21 winners of Bota e Ndryshimit program have been supported so far. The project is implemented throughout Albania, both in urban and rural areas. Funding has been dedicated to different groups in need including thalassemic children, orphans, homeless people, terminally ill patients, former victims of human trafficking, lonely elderly people, pregnant mothers at risk of abandoning their babies, prisoners, Roma community, people in need in remote areas of the country, and other environmental initiatives as well. Special attention in the strategy and programs of the Foundation is dedicated to people with disabilities through support with a range of projects such as the manufacturing of wheelchairs, employment programs for disabled people, establishment of laboratories, use of programs tailored to blind people, special educational programs for certain categories, organization of Special Olympics Games in the recent years and many other initiatives.

**Raiffeisen Bank**, following its sponsorship policy, is focused mainly on education and social support of children and students, as well as improvement of the environment in different cities and areas of the country.

Raiffeisen Bank has spent more than half a million Euros in social projects showing its commitment to improving community life. The bank, through joint projects with several municipalities in the country, has contributed to the reconstruction and equipment of school libraries with books and to the reconstruction of some schoolyards in Tirana, Elbasan, Berat, Shkodra, Korça, Durrësi and other cities. Raiffeisen Bank has supported other initiatives such as the Student Conference for 5 years and the stock exchange, the National Basketball Championship with the participation of 1,500 children in the entire country, equipment with computers of the Finance and Accounting Department of the Faculty of Economics at Luigj Gurakuqi University of Shkodra, reconstruction of the concert hall of Preng Jakova Art School in Shkodra, support of the initiative of the municipality of Tirana One Citizen-One Tree for two years, other projects for planting trees in the cities of Berat, Kruja, Lushnja and other environmental projects to clean the coastal areas of the country. One of the specifics of the company's activity is the wide range of engagement of the staff in certain activities such as cleaning the coast of Vlora, Durrësi, Divjaka and Shëngjini.

Raiffeisen Bank Albania has made great contribution in events of natural disasters as well. It is worth considering the amount of 100,000 Euros, a contribution to the northern areas affected by floods. Other donations for this cause have also been made by the company staff.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

### ***ACA, Ministry of Royal Court, fund 150, year 1938, file V-58***

Memo of the General Directorate of the Albanian Red Cross addressed to the Ministry of Royal Court on the situation and measures to be taken for the development of the Red Cross activity.

(In the description of the income of the Red Cross are also included immovable property among others the following, in which cases the donors have been mentioned:

1. Olive groves of 638 trees located in Kryesi-Përcllesh of Tirana, donated by the belated Hasan Vogli;
2. Rreth property donated to the Red Cross by his Highness, the King along with the zoo-technical station in Xhafzotaj, which consists of 600 hectares, 200 of which have been taken by the above-mentioned station and the rest by local farmers who are in general experiencing a non-opportune economic situation.
3. The pine forest in Divjaka, donated to the Red Cross by his Highness, the King, with a surface area of 15 km length and 1.5 km width along the Adriatic coastline.
4. Property in Saranda, a valuable donation by his Highness, the King, which was given to the Red Cross on 24 March 1937.

### ***ACA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, fund 151, year 1923, file 54***

A letter that was received by our consulate in Athens which states that the so-called Konstantin Kena (from Livadh) of Përmet, who passed away in 1913 in Matai (Egypt) has left 20,000 Egyptian liras for the schools in Përmet.

As the guardian for disbursement of this money was assigned the Greek government with its representation in Përmet.

Please conduct the necessary investigation on this matter and inform us of conclusions.

Based on the information we have, many other Albanians have left money to the benefit of schools in Albania, however this money seems to be deposited in Greek banks. It would be reasonable to prepare a list with the names of these benefactors and the amounts of money and the currency they have left their donation in.

Minister of Foreign Affairs

***(Information compiled by the Ministry of Interior and sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 18 August 1923)***

Following this memo No.12488, dated 26.06.1923 we have the honor of sending attached a copy of the will of Konstantin Zhapa from Labova and copies of the wills of other benefactors from Gjinokastra submitted by memo Nr. 3509/18 dated 6.8.1923 of the Prefecture of Gjirokastra, which

states in that memo that in addition to those [names above], it has been informed that the following have left respectively:

Vangjel Zhapa from Labova 1,200 drachma  
Qirjako Llapa from Dhrovjani 10,000 drachma  
Theodor Tatari from Dhrovjani 570 drachma  
Spiro Xhaferi from Dhrovjani 1,000 drachma  
Dhespina Zisos Cuni from Dhrovjani 440 drachma  
Petro Prackes from Dhrovjani 30,000 drachma  
Dhimitri Elimit from Livina 8,500 drachma

From which with the exception of the last two (that all the 20,000 drachmas have been left to the elementary school in Dhrovjan village and all the 8,500 drachma have been left to the schools of Livina), the other amounts have been left to Dhrovjan village and have been deposited in the National Bank of Greece. The schools have the right to withdraw only the interest accrued and not the actual initial amount, with the exception of the amount left by Vangjel Zhapa, which is to be sent to the schools of Upper and Lower Dhrovjna annually by the Zhpio Commission in Athens.

Attached were sending a list of the benefactors from Korça, which reflects also the amounts deposited in the National Bank of Greece.

The Prefecture of Korça writes that their wills are deposited in the Metropolis over there and that they are written in the Greek language.

Minister of Interior Rauf Fico

***CSA, Prime Minister's Office, fund 149, year 1936, file V-217.***

The Ministry of Interior sends to the Prime Minister's Office its opinion memo on poverty on 8/5/1936.

This ministry has observed that poverty exists at a very high degree and begging is spread extensively.

Unfortunately in our country not only are the charity institutions lacking everywhere, but what is worse is the fact also the feeling of philanthropy to the proper degree is lacking as well. Probably among the beggars one finds lazy people who have turned begging into a habit, however, in most of the cases the elderly people, the disabled, the blind, the widows with little children are pushed to begging as a result of their extreme needs.

Thus, with the goal of identifying the possibility of establishing a charity institution, as it would be the establishment of housing for elderly, disabled and blind, the ministry has established a commission that would look into the possibility of raising funds for this purpose and the findings of this commission would be elaborated in the report attached.

We would like to remind the Prime Minister's Office that his Highness himself, the King, has taken an interest in this issue through the royal order no. 374, dated 5.8.1935 addressed to the Prime Minister's Office.

### a.Original documents

#### a.1. Archive Resources

Central State Archive (CSA):

Fund: Albanian Society in Egypt/Shoqëri Shqiptare në Egjipt, no. 97.  
Fund: Archbishop of Shkodra/Arqipeshkvia e Shkodrës.no 132.  
Fund: Franciscan Order/ Urdhri Françeskan, no. 133.  
Fund: Jesuit Order /Urdhri Jezuit, no. 134.n  
Fund: Metropolis of Korça/ Mitropolia e Korçës, no. 141.  
Fund: Presidency of the Council of Ministers/ Kryesia e Këshillit të Ministrave, no. 149.  
Fund: Ministry of Royal Court/ Ministria e Oborrit Mbretëror,no.150.  
Fund: Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme, no. 151.  
Fund: Ministry of Interior/ Ministria e Punëve të Brendëshme,no. 152.  
Fund: Ministry of Justice/ Ministria e Drejtësisë, no. 155.Fund:  
General Vice-regency /Mëkëmbësia e Përgjithëshme, no. 161.  
Fund: Italian Consulate /Legata Italiane, no. 163.  
Fund: Ministry of Education /Ministria e Arsimit, no. 195.  
Fund: General Directorate of Health/ Drejtoria e Përgjithëshme e Shëndetësisë, no. 202.  
Fund: Albanian Red Cross/ Kryqi i Kuq Shqiptar, no. 203.  
Fund: Fascist Militia /Milicia Fashiste, no. 214.  
Fund: Prefecture of Elbasan /Prefektura e Elbasanit, no. 217.  
Fund: Prefecture of Korça/ Prefektura e Korçës, no. 317.  
Fund: Idhomene Kosturi company / Firma Tregtare Idhomene Kosturi, no. 424.  
Fund: Collection of Parties, Organizations and Societies/Koleksioni i Partive, Organizatave dhe Shoqërive, no. 447.  
Fund: Muslim Community /Komuniteti Mysliman, no. 482.  
Fund: Bektashi Community/ Komuniteti Bektashi, no. 483.  
Fund: Anti-Fascist National Liberation Council /Këshilli Antifashist Nacionalçirimtar, no. 489.Fund: Council of Ministers /Këshilli i Ministrave, no. 490.

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## **b. Secondary resources**

### **b.1. Written press organs**

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 Posta e Korçës / The Korça Post Office  
 Shqipëri' e re/ New Albania  
 Shqipëtari i Amerikës/ Albanian of America  
 Zëri i Popullit/ People's Voice

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