



**PARTNERS**ALBANIA  
FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

# A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN ALBANIA



Rockefeller  
Brothers Fund  
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World

# **A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN ALBANIA**

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# Table of Contents

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN ALBANIA FROM THE 19TH CENTURY UNTIL 1920 .....	5
1.1 Regional and geographical factors .....	11
1.2 Social and class factors .....	12
1.3 Religious factor .....	16
1.4 Distinguished philanthropists and benefactors .....	18
1.4.1 Region of Gjirokastra .....	18
1.4.2 Region of Përmeti .....	21
1.4.3 Region of Korça .....	22
1.4.4 Region of Vlora .....	27
1.4.5 Region of Berati .....	30
1.4.6 Region of central Albania .....	30
1.5 Charitable and philanthropic societies .....	34
1.5.1 Societies founded in the Albanian territories .....	34
1.5.1.1 Societies founded in Korça .....	35
1.5.1.2 Societies founded in Përmet .....	37
1.5.1.3 Charitable Societies founded in Gjirokastër .....	38
1.5.1.4 Societies founded in Vlorë .....	38
1.5.1.5 Charitable Societies founded in Shkodër .....	38
1.5.2 Societies founded in Diaspora .....	39
1.5.2.1 Societies founded in Romania .....	39
1.5.2.2 Charitable societies founded in Bulgaria .....	42
1.5.2.3 Charitable societies founded in Western Europe .....	42
1.5.2.4 Charitable societies founded in the Ottoman Empire .....	42
1.5.2.5 Charitable societies founded in the United States of America ...	43
2. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN 1920–1990 .....	48
2.1 Charity and philanthropy in 1920–1939 .....	48
2.2 Famous philanthropists and benefactors in 1920–1939 .....	56

2.2.1 Charity and philanthropy in the region of Korça .....	56
2.2.2 Charity and philanthropy in the regions of Vlora, Berati and Gjirokastra .....	60
2.2.3 Philanthropists and benefactors from the region of Elbasani .....	62
2.2.4 Philanthropists and benefactors from the region of Tirana .....	63
2.2.5 Charity and philanthropy in the region of Shkodra .....	73
2.2.6 Albanian Diaspora support for the Albanian Red Cross .....	74
2.2.7 Charitable and philanthropic activity of Albanian Diaspora .....	74
2.3 Charity and philanthropy during 1939-1944 .....	78
2.4 Charity and philanthropy in the years 1945-1990 .....	88
3. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY AFTER 1990 .....	92
3.1 Practices of philanthropic activity of several companies in Albania .....	93
ADDITIONAL MATERIALS .....	98
RESOURCE MATERIALS .....	100

# Preface and Acknowledgments

This study aims to provide a historical overview of the development of philanthropy in Albania, covering various periods from the 19th century to the present. The evidence presented is based on existing documents, which are limited in number on this subject. The study did not delve deeply into analyzing the development of philanthropy and charity after 1990, as this was beyond its scope. The relatively recent nature of this period, the ambiguous philanthropic activities over the past two decades, and the lack of comprehensive documentation by both individuals and the state necessitate a different approach to the study.

Partners Albania, recognizing the importance of analyzing philanthropic activities during this period, has undertaken and will continue to conduct in-depth studies on this topic in the future.

Partners Albania expresses its gratitude to all the business representatives who participated in the study for their cooperation and valuable contributions.

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# Introduction

Philanthropy in Albania has a distinct history, deeply intertwined with the social, economic, and historical circumstances that have shaped the Albanian population. The earliest traces of philanthropic activity among Albanians can be traced back to medieval times. While mutual help and support are universal aspects of human nature, present in all societies and across various periods, the expression of these values in Albania reflects the unique context and stages of the country's societal development.

This study focuses on charity and philanthropy in Albania from the 19th century onward, marking a period during which these activities began to take on new and distinct characteristics. Moving away from the older systems associated with Ottoman social organization, charitable and philanthropic endeavors in Albania started to evolve towards more localized forms of social organization.

The major upheavals of the 19th century reshaped the global landscape and significantly influenced the historical trajectories of European countries, including Albania. These changes permeated all aspects of life, including charity and philanthropy. After analyzing extensive material on the subject, we have identified two distinct phases in the evolution of charitable and philanthropic activities: *from the 19th century until 1920, and from 1920 onwards.*

During the first phase, much of the philanthropic activity took place under the administrative rule of the Ottoman Empire, giving it characteristics distinct from those of the later period. Although Albania declared its independence in 1912, the foundations of the Albanian state were truly established during the Lushnja Congress and the subsequent government. The years 1912-1920 were marked by uncertainty, and as a result, this period shares more in common with the preceding Ottoman era than with the period that followed. The continuity from the Ottoman period into the early years of Albanian independence is evident in the charitable and philanthropic activities, which only began to shift in focus and form after 1920.

In the first period, philanthropic efforts were primarily driven by *Albanian immigrants living abroad*. However, in the second period, while the diaspora continued to play a role, local individuals increasingly took center stage.

The establishment of an independent Albanian state did not necessarily lead to an increase in charitable and philanthropic activities. As Albanians formed their own state, the notion arose that responsibilities previously shouldered by immigrants and local benefactors were now duties of the state.

This coincided with the rise of etatisme in Albania, where the state was perceived more as the guardian of society rather than merely a regulator of relationships and guarantor of law.

This mentality was further reinforced during the emergence of communism, during which philanthropic activities completely disappeared. It is worth noting that between the two world wars, the Albanian state did encourage charitable and philanthropic activities. This encouragement was partly driven by the limited financial resources of the Albanian state, with charity and philanthropy seen as ways to alleviate the state's financial burden. However, Albanian society did not respond as robustly as expected to this encouragement.

The section covering the post-1920 period is divided into three subperiods: 1920-1939, 1939-1944, and 1944-1990. This chronological division aligns with the significant historical developments that the Albanian state experienced during these years. Each of these periods is associated with substantial historical changes that had a clear impact on charitable and philanthropic activities in Albania.

The focus of this study will encompass the charitable and philanthropic activities of Albanians not only within the borders of today's Albanian state but also in territories that make up the historical Albanian corpus.

*Charity and philanthropy particularly developed during the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century through the efforts of Albanians living abroad. Therefore, this study will not be restricted to the activities of Albanians residing in Albania, as such a limitation would render the study incomplete.*

It is important to emphasize that, in most cases, charitable and philanthropic activities aimed to support the development, modernization, and emancipation of the Albanian population. These activities were closely linked to the national Albanian movement, with a significant focus on education, which was one of the main goals of the movement. As you will discover, *education has been a key objective of the charitable and philanthropic efforts* carried out by Albanians.

Charity and philanthropy were not limited to specific individuals but were also central to the activities of charitable societies established for this purpose. These activities often targeted regions or villages where the philanthropists originated, highlighting the importance of community and origin in their efforts.

To fully understand the issue of charity and philanthropy among Albanians, it is necessary to clarify these two concepts. Due to their nature, it is often difficult to clearly distinguish between them.

*Charity*, in Albanian, is equivalent to the Latin word "caritas," derived from "carus," meaning dear. It signifies love for those close to us and encourages involvement in good deeds. *Philanthropy*, on the other hand, derives from ancient Greek and literally means love for mankind. It exceeds the boundaries of charity, encompassing a broader mission and a more noble understanding.

Philanthropy includes all humanity without discrimination based on tribe, religion, race, or other factors. It is an ideal that seeks the improvement of human society.

In most cases, charitable and philanthropic activities among Albanians were targeted towards nationalism and regionalism, aiming to help social groups characterized as "dear ones" or closely related through blood, religion, or nationality. With few exceptions, these activities did not focus on individuals as beings or mankind as a society but rather on the broader Albanian community. This focus makes it somewhat difficult to identify the Promethean archetype, which is intertwined with the modern and contemporary understanding of philanthropy. The scope of these activities was often narrow, yet this does not imply a lack of philanthropic activity among Albanians. Albanians did indeed have their own Prometheans.

Considering the miserable living conditions, poverty, and lack of knowledge among the Albanian population, the efforts of Albanian philanthropists to disseminate knowledge through education were transformative. Education was used not only as a means to heal society's wounds but also as a powerful tool and stable foundation for a better and more prosperous future. Thus, Albanian philanthropists closely aligned with the Promethean ideal.

Given the conditions and historical needs of the Albanian people, we will consider philanthropic activities as those carried out by individuals or societies that focused their efforts on Albanians and had a significant impact on Albanian society. Additionally, charity and philanthropy can be distinguished by the amount of donations. However, we must be cautious with this criterion. Philanthropic activities are those that enable distinct changes in society, which typically require substantial resources. Nevertheless, wealth should not be the sole criterion for identifying philanthropists in the Albanian context. Often, the purpose and ideas behind the activities prevail over limited financial resources, serving as a vision that mobilizes society and directs it toward the future. This is especially true for poor and undeveloped Albania.

Therefore, in the first part of the study, which covers the period when Albania was part of a multinational state with minimal efforts to improve Albanian livelihoods, we will assess the purpose and impact as a measure to distinguish philanthropy from charity. In the second part, which discusses the period when Albanians had their own state, wealth will serve as an important instrument for distinguishing philanthropy from charity.

In addition to the extent of the activities and the amounts provided, another criterion for distinguishing philanthropy from charity will be the vision and goals set by the activities. We will define philanthropic activities as those aimed at addressing future needs in addition to current ones. Meanwhile, we will define charity activities as those with a focus on immediate, local interests, limited in both the amounts donated and their scope.

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

The development of charity and philanthropy is defined by two basic elements: economic power and social values. To better understand the dynamics of the philanthropic phenomenon among Albanians until 1920, it is necessary to first understand the context in which these activities took place. Charity and philanthropy in Albanian territories did not emerge in isolation; they have their own history and have evolved dynamically alongside historical developments in these areas. Therefore, it is essential to present the historical background of Albania, particularly during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Analyzing the historical developments of this period will help us understand the interaction between economic power and social values and, consequently, the factors that influenced the scale and development of charity and philanthropy.

Albanians have supported people in need since ancient times. During the medieval period, the church, which was central to social, political, and economic life, played a key role in charitable activities.[1] Church institutions, particularly those of the Catholic Church, were engaged in these activities in Albanian territories as early as the 16th century. Benedictine and Franciscan religious orders for beggars in the city of Shkodra were such examples.[2] The presence of religious orders involved in education and likely in charitable works continued in this city even in the 15th century, with the brotherhoods of Saint Mercury and Saint Barbara.[3]

The Ottoman Empire did not interrupt philanthropic activity, although its intensity was lower in the initial centuries following the Ottoman conquest. One notable case is that of Iljaz Bej Mirahori, who established several charitable foundations in Korça at the beginning of the 16th century. These foundations became a significant factor in attracting the Muslim population from the surrounding villages to the city.[4] From this point onward, we believe that the low degree of charity was influenced by the decline in civic life that followed the Ottoman conquest.

The Ottoman invasion of Albania led to the complete destruction of many Albanian cities, reducing them to populations similar to those of villages.[5] It took more than a century for civic life to regenerate.[6]

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[1] Ermal Baze, *The City of Shkodra in the First Half of the 14th Century*, PhD thesis at University of Tirana, 92.

[2] *Ibid.* 97

[3] Injac Zamputi, *Cadastral and Concession Register for the Shkodra District 1416–1417*, Tirana: Academy of Science of the PSRA, 1977, 35.

[4] Petraq Pepo, *Documentary Materials for Southeast Albania in the 18th–Early 20th Century (Korës and Selasforit Codex)*, vol. I, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1981, 5–6.

[5] Selami Pulaha, "Albanian Cities under the Ottoman Military Feudal Regime during the 15th–16th Centuries," *Monumentet*, no. 1, 1984: 17–18.

[6] *Ibid.* 26.

During this period, examples of charitable activities were very limited. By the end of the 16th century, Albanian cities began a transformation, gradually evolving from political-military centers to socio-economic hubs.[7] Cities started to recover from destruction, and professional corporations, in the form of oriental guilds, began to emerge. These developments laid the foundation for further urban growth and the revival of civic life.[8]

The end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century marked the beginning of the prosperity of civic life in Albanian territories.[9] Evidence of increased charitable activities began to emerge during this period, indicating a strong connection between philanthropic activity and industrial production, as well as the overall prosperity of civic life. The trend in urban development closely mirrors the trend in charitable and philanthropic activity.

The Korça region, in particular, was known for its charitable endeavors. One of the most notable figures in this field was Josif Korçari from Voskopojë. He lived during the 16th and 17th centuries and was instrumental in establishing the Voskopojë printing house and the Akademia e Re school. The school was funded by the citizens of Voskopojë with the aim of creating an educational institution that was unparalleled at the time.[10]

In 1725, he also assisted the Varoshi area of Korça in building a boys' school, with contributions from the residents of Vithkuqi,[11] Boboshtica and Kostandin Pano Kukuzeli contributed as well.[12]

The prosperity of guilds in the 18th century provided a strong economic foundation for the development of charitable work in Albanian cities. These guilds donated money to support education and culture in their respective cities. For example, in 1738, the unions (rufets) of curriers, saddlers, shoemakers, butchers, and others in Korça decided to establish a boys' school where all young boys of the city could be educated without discrimination. [13] This school was conducted in the Greek language, reflecting the inclusive spirit of the community's philanthropic efforts.

The role of guilds in the development of education and culture was not limited to the city and region of Korça; it was observed in other cities as well. The advancement of education saw significant progress in various urban centers, such as Shkodra, Janina, and Manastir, largely due to the growth of the urban bourgeoisie and their charitable donations.[14] These contributions were instrumental in fostering educational and cultural development within these communities.

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[7]Ibid. 25.

[8]Ibid. 40.

[9]Zija Shkodra, *The Albanian City during the National Renaissance*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1984, 6.

[10] Aurel Plasari, *The Voskopje Phenomenon*, 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.

[14] Petrika Thëngjilli, *History of the Albanian People 395–1875*, Tirana: ShBLU, 1999, 296.

We are also aware of the guilds in Gjirokastra, which constructed a school near the town bazaar<sup>[15]</sup> as well as the construction of a school in Elbasan in 1763 with funds raised from the Christian population of the city.<sup>[16]</sup>

In the absence of regular municipal entities, the maintenance of public infrastructure was carried out by guilds. Through funds raised, these guilds constructed bridges, streets, and drinking fountains, opened wells, cleaned market areas, and opened tunnels, among other activities.<sup>[17]</sup>

Guilds also contributed to the improvement of urban planning in cities and towns by establishing places of worship, thereby continuously supporting clerical institutions. For example, in Voskopoja, most churches were constructed by the city's guilds. Similarly, the Korça Metropolis, dating back to 1725, was built with funds collected from the city's guilds.<sup>[18]</sup>

Based on these instances, we conclude that charity has not been an isolated phenomenon. Similar instances likely occurred in other Albanian territories and cities, but the lack of sources prevents us from generalizing and conducting more detailed analyses for the period prior to the 19th century. Nevertheless, these examples provide clear evidence of the continuity of charitable activities before and after the Ottoman Empire.

One of the features of charitable activity during this period is its limitation within the boundaries of clan solidarity and civil guild groups. These activities aimed to preserve and increase the homogeneity of specific communities or groups, particularly when confronted with other communities or groups. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of the traders' guild (rufet) of Voskopoja.<sup>[19]</sup>

The social functions within the guild groups were defined and codified in their respective charters. These guilds also carried out social functions aimed at supporting and helping members and their families in times of need or misfortune. This mutual support, which transformed the guild into a large family, was characteristic of feudal societies, highlighting their closed and collective nature. Help and support were limited to specific vocational groups and did not extend further.

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[15] Zija Shkodra, *The Albanian City during the National Renaissance*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences, 1984, 73.

[16] Petrika Thëngjilli, cited document, 239.

[17] Zija Shkodra, *Albanian Guilds*, Tirana: Academy of Sciences, 1973, 256–257.

[18] *Ibid.* 238–239.

[19] *Ibid.* 254.

Above all, this was mutual solidarity and assistance within a group in a society that was not individualistic in the contemporary sense but rather in the feudal sense. Individuals were identified by their community, and relationships among different communities or social strata were limited. In this context, material support and charity were confined to close-knit groups and served to maintain the homogeneity of the group. In addition to guilds, religious institutions also promoted such activities, as they had historically carried out this function. However, even in this case, their charity work was characterized by the same closed nature, focusing within their respective religious communities.

During the 19th century, new historical developments began to occur, affecting the extent and form of charitable and philanthropic activity. Changes in the Albanian territories were influenced by the developments taking place in Western Europe. These new historical processes contributed to the slow but continuous fracturing of the feudal shell in which the Albanian population lived. This evolution was later reflected in charitable and philanthropic activities, where new and old elements began to fuse.

The 19th century represents the golden era of Western Europe. Starting from the second half of this century, Western Europe exercised its influence and control over the entire world on an unprecedented scale. It became the political, economic, and cultural center of the world. The patterns and ideas generated in Western Europe inevitably influenced the history of societies living in the Balkan Peninsula, one of the first regions to be affected by these Western developments.[20]

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. Religion played a crucial role in identity within the Ottoman Empire, leading Albanian Christians to identify themselves as Catholic Latin and Rum, or Greek Byzantine Orthodox. In this multinational, multilingual, and multi-religious state, religion equated to national belonging. Most Muslim Albanians maintained their loyalty towards the Ottoman Sultan and their cultural orientation was predominantly eastward rather than westward.[21]

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[20] Leften S. Stavrianos, "The influence of the West on the Balkans", in Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Balkans in Transition*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963, 214.

[21] Stavro Skëndi, *Albanian National Awakening*, Tirana: Phoenix & ShLK, 2000, 420.

While Porta e Lartë [Sublime Gate] remained a Muslim country until the end, Christian Albanians, living in a context where the relationship between rulers and the ruled was defined by religion, factor,[22] were more open to the West and inclined to more easily adopt Western models. This openness equated to modernization in the context of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the context of the Ottoman administration system, regional and local particularities developed on a large scale. The identification of individuals with their groups and the collective identities of their villages, regions, clans, families, professions, or religions continued to be strongly preserved in Albania until the early 20th century. The preservation and even strengthening of these identities significantly obstructed the development of individualism. This impacted charitable and philanthropic activities, as they retained the features of typical charity and mutual help within different communities. Thus, in most cases, charity or philanthropy appeared as support that members of a specific residential center, tied to local identity, or members of a specific religious community, provided 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 is important to note that the first instances of this type of activity began to emerge during the second half of the 19th century. These instances signaled the beginning of changes in the mentality and identities within Albanian society.

The economy was predominantly rural and underdeveloped.[23]

Even though the country was geographically close to the West and major communication routes, it was very poor and isolated from the rest of the world. The rugged mountainous terrain further contributed to this isolation. The mountains, which had once served as fortresses for Albanians to protect the freedom of their communities, had now become significant obstacles to communication and contact with the outside world. Social dynamics and external contacts remained minimal due to the lack of communication routes, widespread poverty, a predominantly rural economy, and a largely self-sufficient household economy. Albanians remained enclosed in a medieval societal shell for an extended period. Additionally, much of the population was steeped in ignorance due to an underdeveloped education system. The Ottoman administration supported the development of religious schools but neglected general education.[24]

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[22] Ibid. 419.

[23] History of the Albanian People, vol. II, Tirana: Toena, 2002, 37.

[24] Ibid. 39.

Poverty and lack of development did not create suitable conditions for the growth of charity and philanthropy. However, the need for charitable and philanthropic activities was even greater, especially as the Sublime Gate showed no willingness to change the situation. In the face of extraordinary challenges, the Albanian society required these activities more than ever.

A society is never monolithic, and regional realities vary. Albania was no exception to this rule, as seen in the development of charitable and philanthropic activities, which were more prevalent in some regions than others. The conditions and circumstances influenced the variability in the intensity of charitable and philanthropic efforts across Albania.

It is important to note that although economic, social, and political circumstances in Albanian territories were not always conducive to the development of charitable and philanthropic activities, the extent of philanthropy was largely influenced by contacts with the outside world. This does not imply that philanthropy as a practice was borrowed by Albanians; rather, external interactions helped shape and stimulate its development.[25]

Contacts with the outside world created the right circumstances for this activity to develop and escalate.

The social dynamics and the acceptance of change by members of social groups served as a starting point for carrying out this activity, with the key goal of achieving positive societal change, i.e., progress. Thus, the development and intensity of philanthropic activity were not defined by the inclination or tradition of some Albanians to engage in such activities but by certain necessary preconditions. The variability in philanthropic efforts was largely influenced by the extent of connections with more developed territories. Mobility and movement were crucial factors that strengthened and advanced philanthropy in Albanian territories. As a result, many Albanian benefactors and philanthropists during this period were immigrants. *Immigration played a significant role in the development of philanthropy.*

After examining the sources, we concluded that the mechanisms for analyzing the reasons and premises that defined the scale and extent of charitable and philanthropic activity during this time were dictated by regional, geographical, class, social, and religious factors.

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[25] 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 reviewing the regional and geographical factors, we must first consider the position of certain regions in terms of their openness to the world, particularly to the West, with its modernization and ideas. In general, the south of Albania, compared to the north, has been geographically more open to foreign influence.[26]

The softer geographic terrain, better communication infrastructure, higher presence of central government control, and the disorganization of the clannish society in the south of the country,[27] with a few exceptions, made the south more advanced than the north and resulted in a higher level of educated people.[28]

Southeastern Albania distinguished itself in a special way due to its openness to contacts with other countries. Located closer to commercial routes that traversed the Balkans, the provinces in this region were more exposed to the movement of goods, people, and ideas. This greater openness to the world would necessarily crack the ring of closed feudal life more quickly. The population of these regions was among the first to immigrate, with people from Korça immigrating to Egypt to work in trade as early as 1800.[29]

This mobility impacted all levels of economic, social, and cultural life and was reflected in charitable and philanthropic activities. Successful immigrants from these regions often supported the communities they originated from. Their contributions were aimed at developing and improving the lives of their fellow farmers or citizens, drawing on the models and practices they had acquired in the countries to which they had immigrated.

The key focus of Albanian immigration were Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and Egypt, where Albanians found support from the dynasty of Egyptian khedives, who were of Albanian descent. Later, the United States of America[30] also became a significant destination for Albanian immigrants.

In these countries, Albanian immigrants encountered a more developed world than their native country. Beyond opportunities for enrichment, they had greater chances to expand their horizons and encounter European political ideologies and intellectual movements, where nationalism held a significant place.

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[26] Eqrem Çabej, *Albanians between the East and the West*, Tirana: Çabej, 1994, 22.

[27] Stavro Skëndi, cited document, 25.

[28] *Ibid.* 419.

[29] CSA, end 97, 1928, d. 22, journal 1.

[30] *History of the People...*, 69–70.

Western influences spread to the southeastern European Peninsula through immigration, exerting a powerful cultural influence and making the West known to the region, particularly through immigrants returning to their homeland.[31]

As a result, Albanian immigrants became some of the first supporters of Albanian nationalism, often transforming into nationalists and modernizers. The interaction between these two roles varied among individuals. What is important is that immigration served not only as a "nursery" for nationalism but also as a "greenhouse" where it was cultivated. Even when immigrants did not become nationalists, they promoted the development of their hometowns. Immigration strengthened their sense of clannish and regional solidarity and fueled their desire to improve and develop their communities of origin. This is how the charitable deeds of Albanian immigrants began, initially focusing on supporting the villages or cities they came from.

## 1.2 Social and class factors

The social and class factors refer to the socio-economic groups to which most of the promoters of charitable and philanthropic activities belonged. To engage in philanthropic activity, one typically needs a strong economic foundation to support long-term projects that impact society. However, it is also essential to have a set of values, which may evolve, that guide the use of wealth for the benefit of society. The capitalist culture of investment and the ideas for improvement were central to the motivations driving this activity. The goal of philanthropy is change, and philanthropists generally seek to alter the status quo by following a vision and strategy. Not all social groups share the same values and vision. Middle-class groups are usually more receptive to change. In this group, values, mentality, and wealth closely intertwine for the purpose of philanthropy. The middle class, particularly large traders, tend to be more cosmopolitan by nature.

Their frequent contacts with Western and Central Europe, which were experiencing significant economic growth and had established trade relationships with the Balkans[32] due to their needs for raw materials, led to irreversible developments in the region.

These relationships were primarily facilitated by Christian Orthodox traders who conducted business mainly with Western and Central Europe. These traders had a revolutionary influence on the Peninsula[33].

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[31] Leften S. Stavrianos, cited document, 206.

[32] Charles & Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan Nation States 1804–1920*, Tirana: Dituria, 2004, 21.

[33] *Ibid.* 23

In Albania, the dominant engagement in charitable and philanthropic activities by this group, which included the middle-class nuclei of cities and wealthy farmers who made their fortunes through immigration, was evident.

Being closer to modernization and investment, this group understood the value of education, knowledge, and communication routes earlier than the rest of the population. Above all, they were the first to embrace the positive idea of progress. Tradition and the 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 toward modernization.*

In the context of the topic we are analyzing, differences are observed in the engagement in charitable and philanthropic activities within the middle class. While the Albanian urban middle class remained confined within the isolated guild mentality, whose rules continued to be strong in Albanian cities, individuals who became wealthy through immigration distinguished themselves because their mentality and wealth intertwined more effectively for the purpose of developing philanthropy. These were the so-called *self-made men*, who did not owe their wealth to family background, origin, or formal education. These individuals became rich through their talent, energy, sharpness, tireless work, and desire for wealth. Enrichment opportunities arose thanks to a dynamic society, unlike the static European society before the 19th century.[34]

These individuals, who had risen from rags to riches, became the strongest opponents of aristocratic society[35] and champions of the new era. In the case of Albania, this group was represented by wealthy Albanian immigrants with modest backgrounds. Like their European counterparts, they symbolized the new era that was approaching. Motivated by a desire to modernize their homeland, they became pioneers of true philanthropic activity in Albania.

The activities initiated by these extraordinarily rich and successful individuals can be regarded as their response, or vision, to the two keyways of building tradition in European society at the time. These two ways, which interacted in parallel, were: first, the changing social landscape required new means to guarantee the cohesion of groups; and second, the increasing dynamics of societies required new political directions that challenged the traditional hierarchies that had led societies until then.[36]

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

[35] *Ibid.* 185

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

We can find both these elements in their philanthropic activity. They fought the old organization by striving to introduce new types of social cohesion, such as the idea of the nation as a purpose and nationalism as an ideology[37] and by overturning or reforming the archaic political structures that controlled Albanian society until that time. Thus, political and social changes aligned, making charitable and philanthropic activities powerful means to achieve these purposes. Education took on 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 fully liberated. They could not distance themselves from the groups they came from, and this was reflected in their charitable and philanthropic work, which was generally limited to certain regional or religious communities. Faik Konica astutely noted this, writing that, for example, nationalism among people from Korça, which was closely related to their charitable and philanthropic activity, had a community nature as all their efforts were concentrated on guaranteeing the national future of Korça.[38]

However, it must be emphasized that immigrants who accumulated wealth were not the only ones engaged in charitable and philanthropic activities. Many Albanian immigrants participated in these activities through societies. Initially, the activities of these societies were focused on their homeland in the narrowest sense, such as their village, city, or region. Immigrants aimed to improve the lives of their fellow members from the same village, city, or religious group rather than their fellow nationals more broadly. As a result, the purpose was truly philanthropic only in a few cases. Many charitable societies established by Albanian immigrants were based on local solidarity. Immigrants from a particular village or city formed these societies to help each other in a foreign place where they had no other support. These societies were similar to guilds in their social functions, resembling a large family that provided protection. They were a reflection and reproduction of their homeland's relationships in a foreign country.

These charitable societies exhibited a strong duality. While they contributed to the modernization of their homeland by adopting the example of the countries they had immigrated to—acting as importers of cultural patterns—they also exported these patterns back to their homeland. They created an image of the Albanian microcosm within Albanian communities in European and American metropolises.

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[37] 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 Zhaba or Kristaq Zografi.

[38] Nathalie Clayer, *In the Beginnings of Albanian Nationalism. The birth of a nation with a Muslim majority in Europe*, Tirana: Perpjekja, 2009, 276.

This duality indicates nationalism in its embryonic phase, where modernization and love for the homeland in a narrow regional sense coexisted without excluding each other.

In this way, middle-class immigrants, particularly those who acquired wealth abroad, were very inclined to invest altruistically in their homeland, engaging in charitable and philanthropic deeds aimed at increasing the capacity of their communities to integrate into more advanced societies. These wealthy individuals, who succeeded in countries where skills, rather than social status or religion, were the basis for achievement, tended to recreate 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 devoid of human feelings and never engaged in such activities; their involvement was simply more limited than that of the middle class.

In contrast, the beys class, which had the economic means to engage in charitable and philanthropic activities, was significantly less involved. The capitalist spirit and investment ethics were less prominent within this segment of Albanian society. Accustomed to inheriting wealth due to tradition and social status, the majority of this group was less inclined to pursue philanthropic activities aimed at change. In fact, modernization, dynamics, and change did not serve this group well, as their wealth was based on tradition.

As for Albanian farmers, they lacked both the wealth and the necessary values to perform such activities. Common Albanian farmers lived in a narrow world, were largely ignorant, and often very poor. This stratum was completely unaware of the ideals of development and progress, and consequently, of philanthropic activity. The extent of their involvement was limited to mutual help within their community, driven by clannish solidarity, which cannot truly be regarded as charity, much less as philanthropy. Exceptions to this rule were several villages in the region of Korça, which were not typical Balkan villages. Centers like Vithkuqi, Drenova, Mborja, Boboshtica, and others were important trade hubs not only for Albania but beyond. To provide a meaningful fact, during the second half of the 19th century, the Korça kaza (administrative unit) had 1,175 shops in 68 villages,[39] clearly showing the development of the trade market in this territory and, consequently, the extensive relations it had with both Albanian and non-Albanian territories. Additionally, immigration was very prevalent in these centers. The development of urbanization and the immigration process is why charitable societies, whose purpose was to develop education and improve the village's living conditions, were founded in these villages.

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[39] History of the People..., 51.

## 1.3 Religious factor

When considering the religious factor as a criterion, it is important to note that none of the four religions practiced in Albania obstructed charitable activities. On the contrary, both Islam and Christianity, in their respective branches embraced by Albanians, have charity at their core, as they promote brotherhood among people and emphasize human values. Therefore, this criterion refers not to the role that religious belief played as a promoter of philanthropy and charity, but to the role that religious belonging had during this period in establishing contacts with Western society.

Christians were the first to immigrate, becoming more involved in intensive social dynamics than their fellow nationals. Among them, Albanians from southeastern Albania, who belonged to the Orthodox religion, had more intensive contacts with the West.

An important element worth emphasizing is that while charitable and philanthropic activities among Orthodox Albanians were carried out by non-religious individuals, among Catholic Albanians, these activities were often undertaken by clerical institutions of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church had powerful charitable institutions since medieval times, which became more prominent following the reforms of the Council of Trent and the establishment of religious orders such as the Jesuits, Oratorians, and Ursuline sisters, who were intensively involved in philanthropic activities. This effort was a significant foundation of the Vatican's work and politics for strengthening and spreading the Catholic religion. The Catholic Church has maintained its strong position in this activity from the early modern period to the present.

Consequently, charitable and philanthropic activities were carried out by specific individuals or reestablished charitable societies where traditional institutions had broken down or were no longer performing these functions. The decline of guilds and the lack of charitable and philanthropic activities by the Orthodox Church in the south of the country provided opportunities for actions by specific individuals or charitable societies established by different communities. However, individual charitable and philanthropic activities had limited space where traditional institutions remained strong. This explains why in Shkodra and its surrounding regions, such activities were led by traditional institutions like the Catholic Church. This does not mean that specific individuals did not contribute to these activities, but their assistance was likely channeled through the Catholic Church.

The documentation we possess does not allow us to trace the charitable and philanthropic activities of Muslim religious institutions in detail.

However, based on existing data, Muslim religious institutions, like the Orthodox ones, were minimally engaged in the field of philanthropy. There were many instances of charitable and philanthropic activities among the Muslim population, but compared to the size of the Muslim population, their overall engagement in such activities remained limited.

In conclusion, charity and philanthropy work experienced significant development among the Orthodox community of southeastern Albania throughout the 19th century until 1920. This was due to their openness to Western influences, their earlier involvement in the modernization process, and their ability to secure the necessary funds for charitable and philanthropic activities. Thus, among the southeastern Orthodox Albanians, there was a confluence of necessary values and economic opportunities that facilitated the prominent and distinguished development of charitable and philanthropic activities. During the same period, this symbiosis occurred less frequently in other areas of the country and would expand only in later periods.

It must be emphasized that the analysis and framework explaining the conditions that enabled or obstructed the development of charitable and philanthropic activities among Albanians reflect the sources available on the matter. This analysis might be completely revised with the emergence of new sources. However, the current literature leads us to the above conclusions. There is no doubt that charity has been present in all Albanian territories, as it is a foundational element of all religious beliefs embraced by the Albanian population. Many individuals contributed to and supported religious institutions and the poor. This is easily verified through the Korça and Selafori Codex, which unfortunately is the only documented summary of the 17th-19th century period that speaks of numerous acts of charity by the Christian Orthodox population of Korça. However, this phenomenon was not limited to the population of this region. There is no doubt that other Albanians, regardless of their region or belief, made donations to religious institutions when possible, underscoring that charitable activities were a pillar of the 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 Albanian society. The evolution of such activity from charity to philanthropy is less debatable, as 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 into 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 the town. There, he learned the secrets of medicine, which would serve him in the future. After the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, Vangjel joined the Greek army, where he was awarded several medals for his bravery. After the foundation of the Hellenic state, he was appointed as an officer in the Greek army. However, Vangjel decided to leave Greece, and in 1830 he immigrated to Romania, where he had a stroke of luck. By practicing medicine, he became the owner of many real estate properties, which he managed with great skill. He invested his extraordinary profits, and thanks to his entrepreneurial insight, he expanded his property, becoming one of the richest people in Romania. Never married, Vangjel Zhapa decided to use his wealth for charitable and philanthropic deeds. His philanthropic activity extended to Romania, southern Albania, the Ottoman Empire, and above all, Greece. The focus of his activity was the Orthodox population.

As a patron of art and science and a supporter of revolutionary movements in the Balkans aimed at liberating the Christian populations, Vangjel Zhapa had extensive involvement. He did not remain indifferent to Albanian nationalists who promoted the development of Albanian culture and education. He financed the publication of the first Albanian Abetare (ABC book) prepared by Naum Veqilharxhi, supported the creation of an alphabet for the Albanian language based on the Greek alphabet, and funded the newspaper Pellazgu, published in Albania in Lamia in Greece[40], and funded the opening of schools in several Orthodox villages in the regions of Gjirokastra and Vlora, such as Labova, Dervican, Lekel, Dhruvjan, Bubës, Hundkuq, Piqeras, Nivicë, Delvinë, Përmet, Nivan, Karjan, Filat, and Qeparo. Labova, his birthplace, was particularly in his focus. He opened a vocational school for girls, built three water supply systems, and funded the paving of the village roads.

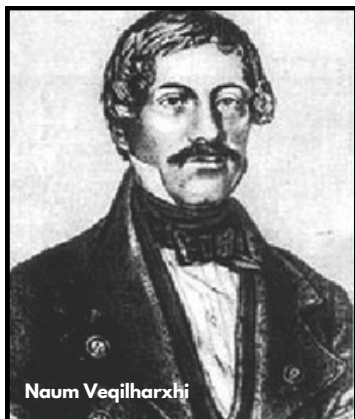


In addition, Vangjel Zhapa funded the opening of girls' schools in Adrianopolis and Constantinople, the construction of the University of Bucharest, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the Exhibition Palace in Athens, and the construction of the Olympic Stadium in Athens.[41]

[40] Qirjako Hila, Vangjel Zhapa, Tirana: Iliria, 2003, 38.

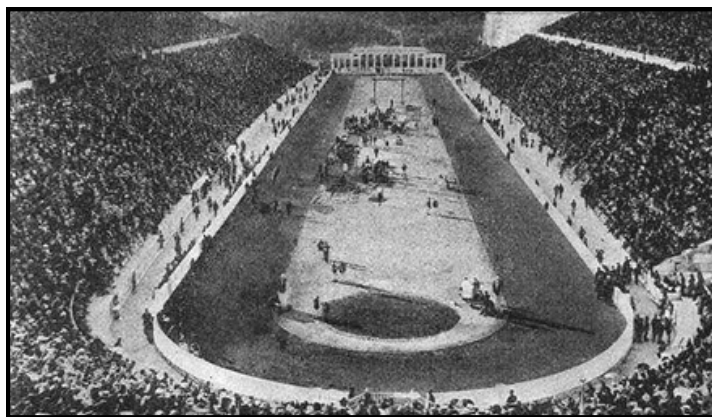
[41] Iljaz Goga, Albanian Benefactors of Education, Tirana: Albin, 2003, 111-115.

He also funded the re-launching of the Olympic Games in Greece,[42] which would later be supported by another Albanian from the village of Qestorat in Gjirokastra, Kristaq Zografi, who was one of the richest people in Greece. Vangjel Zhapa, along with other wealthy Albanians from southern Albania, such as Apostol Arsaqi, Simon Sina, Jani Banga, Jani Dhima, and others, financially supported the construction of significant public works in Athens, including the University of Athens, the National Library, and the Greek Academy.[43]



A Greek historian wrote, "No part of Greece has given birth to as many philanthropists as Epirus." [44] In fact, many of the lands claimed as Greek are Albanian, and if one moves away from the Greek ultranationalist discourse, it becomes clear that many of the great philanthropists considered Greek were actually Orthodox Albanians. These individuals supported the development and empowerment of the Greek state due to their religious affiliation. Religious buildings were also a significant focus of Vangjel Zhapa's philanthropic work. In Albanian territories, he funded the construction of the Church of

Lekli, the Church of Papandia in Labova, the Monastery of Tërbuq, and the Mosque of Hormova.



[42] Qirjako Hila, cited work, 29.

[43] Ibid. 44

[44] Ibid. 46

Beyond these territories, he built the large Shën Triadha Church in Constantinople and the Evangelical Church in Brosteni, Rumania.[45]

According to the will he wrote in 1860, Vangjel Zhapa's wealth was to be used for philanthropic deeds, with a particular focus on Labova and several other Albanian Orthodox villages, where his fortune was intended to develop education. A commission was established in Athens to administer his inheritance, but it never performed its task. In fact, the fortunes of other Albanians who had deposited their money in Greek banks for charitable deeds in their homeland suffered the same fate as Vangjel Zhapa's wealth. In most cases, their wills were never realized. Moreover, their funds were used by the Greek Syllogos to the detriment of the Albanian national cause. The lack of an Albanian state led many of these immigrants to deposit their money in foreign banks, particularly Greek banks, where it was often misused. As a result, a considerable number of them remained as would-be philanthropists and benefactors, with few of their intended projects ever materializing due to the misuse of their fortunes.

In the correspondence between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior in 1923, the names of people involved in charity from the Orthodox villages of Gjirokastra appear. These individuals had deposited money in the National Bank of Greece to build schools in the villages of Dhruvjan and Livina. The most distinguished among them were Qirjako Llapa and Petro Packa from Dhruvjan, as well as Dhimitër Elimi from Livina, who had deposited considerable amounts[46] in the above-mentioned bank.

Other people involved in charity from this region included Llukan Koçi from Labova e Vogël, who emigrated to Romania, and Ilia Harito from Nivani. In the will he wrote in 1894, Llukan Koçi allocated a sum of 1,000 golden francs to pay the teacher's salary in his birthplace, as well as a sum of 1,200 golden francs for the weddings of poor girls in his village, [47] and 200 napoleons for the construction of a school. Ilia Harito used his wealth to contribute to a vocational school for girls in Nivan.

Even in these cases, 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.

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[45] Ibid. 48.

[46] CSA, fund 151, 1923, d. 54, journal 25.

[47] CSA, fund 195, 1923, d. 125, journal 8.

### 1.4.2 Region of Përmet

Compared to its population and territorial expansion, Përmet is one of the Albanian regions with the highest number of benefactors to education.[48] One of the first humanitarians from this region was Pano Zoto, a merchant from Përmet who traded with Austria. In 1778, he established a seven-year school,[49] and in 1785, he founded the Llaso of Përmet by depositing a sum of 50,000 Austrian golden coins in a bank in Vienna.[50] The interest from this deposit was to be used for setting up Greek schools in Përmet, helping poor girls from Përmet get married, and supporting families of disabled people.[51]

Arsaq Hotova, a contemporary of Pano Zoto, set aside a considerable sum in 1788 to open an agricultural school [52] in Përmet.

He also established a school in the village of Hotova, which was funded with money he deposited in the bank.[53] Another humanitarian from Përmet who significantly contributed to the Llaso of his town was Thanas Panajoti. In 1859, he donated a sum of 10,000 grosh[54] towards education in his birthplace through his will. Arqimandriti Agathangjel is another well-known philanthropist from Përmet who, in 1864, donated his entire wealth of 20,000 grosh to the education fund.[55]

Stathaq Duka, a merchant and craftsman from the same town, specified in his will that his wealth be used for scholarships for boys from Përmet to study at universities and to help the poor.[56]

Kostandin Kena from Lavidhi village also contributed to charity for the development of education in this region. Having immigrated to Egypt, Kena left an amount of 20,000 Egyptian liras deposited in a Greek bank in his 1913 will for the establishment of schools in Përmet.[57]

We have no available data on what happened to the money. In 1923, the Albanian government, urged by severe financial problems, started to take an interest in collecting the money left as donations by Albanian immigrants for the development of education in Albania. However, we have no information on the steps taken to collect Kostandin Kena's money or how this matter was resolved.

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[48] Ibid. 129

[49] Ibid.

[50] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 199, 99–100.

[51] CSA, fund 151, year 1923, d. 54, journal 29.

[52] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 134.

[53] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 194, 96.

[54] Ibid. doc. 199, 100.

[55] Ibid.

[56] CSA, fund 151, 1923, d. 54, journal 29.

[57] Ibid. journal 11.

Other benefactors included Josif Fane, who donated a house to the Orthodox community in Përmet to be converted into a school, as well as Petro Moçka, Dhimitraq Anastasi, and Paskal Çali, who made modest contributions to charitable causes, particularly in education.[58]

The Orthodox community of Përmet also raised funds to establish a boys' school and a girls' school.[59]

The Bektashi clergy also made significant contributions to the field of charity, although documentation in this respect is lacking. One notable Bektashi benefactor was Baba Kamber Sadiku from Përmet. Connected to the National Movement since the 19th century, he fled to Romania during the occupation of southern Albania by Greek armies in 1913, where he lived during World War I. He was tragically murdered by robbers who mistook him for a wealthy person. Before his death, he left a will specifying that all his wealth be used to open a primary school at the Derbendi worship place to teach dervishes, muhibs, and their children, as well as to establish a vocational school.[60]

### **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 among the first to emigrate from Albanian territories and, as a result, were the first to recognize and understand the importance of the developments taking place in Europe. Many immigrants from Korça were very successful in their business activities and became very wealthy. Consequently, the combination of two essential elements—wealth and values—is often found among them. This is especially true considering the large number of immigrants from this area.

However, as proven by documents, the tradition of charity had been powerfully present in the region of Korça since the 18th century, when the town and suburban population consistently supported clerical institutions in the construction of various religious artworks.[61]

Considering that these documents reflect only the contributions of the Orthodox part of the population of this area at that time, and acknowledging the benefaction deeds of the Muslim population—on which, unfortunately, we currently have no documentation—we can conclude that charity was very developed in this territory.

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid. journal 30.

[60] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 132–133.

[61] 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.

It is also impressive to note the high involvement of women in these activities. Donations continued with the same intensity into the 19th century.[62] Given the prevailing atmosphere in this large southeastern center, there were undoubtedly individuals who distinguished themselves with their donations. Since 1801, the name of Pavlo Molencki emerges, a merchant from Voskopoja living in Poland, who donated considerable sums to the churches of Korça and the Greek school located there.[63] He is mentioned again in 1860 for his continuous financial support, this time given while he was in Russia, towards the school of Korça and



the Orthodox clerical institutions of the town.[64] In 1832, Limon Doda donated a shop and a large number of his commercial shares to the school in the town.[65] In 1839, Anastas Bogdan Cali donated shops, land, and vintages to the school in the town, town[66], and in 1849, Vasil Shrono, an immigrant in Sistova, Bulgaria, donated 1,000 grosh to the Greek school there.[67]

It is worth mentioning the contribution made by the pashas of Plasa to supply potable water to Korça. In 1799, Mehmet Pashë Plasa built a water storage facility near Drenova. Later, these facilities were spread throughout the city neighborhoods and maintained with funding from his sons.[68]

One of the most famous philanthropists of this region is Anastas Avram Lakçe. Born in the city of Korça in 1820, Lakçe immigrated early to Romania, where he became wealthy through trade. He was very active in supporting the Albanian nationalist societies founded in the Romanian capital and sponsored their activities. Among other contributions, he funded the publication of several works by Naim Frashëri, including "Bagëti e Bujqësi." Lakçe donated substantial funds to establish Albanian schools in Korça and to support education in the town. Lakçe donated substantial funds to establish Albanian schools in Korça and to support education in the town. In 1863, together with his brother Dhimitri, he donated 300 Turkish liras to the Llaso of Korça for the establishment of a new school.[69] As a result of this activity, which considered education as an integral part of the national cause, he ran up against the Orthodox Church and the Greek supporters in the town.[70]

[62]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;

[63]Ibid. vol.I, doc. 8, 82.

[64]Ibid. doc. 110, 188–189.

[65]Ibid. doc. 25, 113.

[66]Ibid. doc. 34, 119–120.

[67]Ibid. doc. 86, 162–165.

[68]Ibid. vol.II, doc. 185, 91.

[69]Ibid. doc. 169, 70.

[70] Ilijaz Gogaj, cited document, 26–28.

After his death in 1890, following his wishes expressed in his will, his wealth was deposited in the National Bank of Greece in Athens. This property was to be used for a series of philanthropic purposes, including the establishment of a vocational school in Korça, the construction of places of worship in his birthplace and in Bucharest, support for the Orthodox clergy in Korça, assistance for a hospital in Athens, and helping poor girls in Korça to get married.[71]

Anastas Lakçe's desires were never realized, as his money disappeared in the same way as that of many other Albanians. Greek banks did their utmost to block the investment of such funds in Albanian territory, as this 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 to Egypt at the age of 20, where he amassed a large fortune in agriculture.[72] He then moved to Romania, where he continued his business in the new Balkan state. There, Jovan Banka connected with another well-known Albanian, Vangjel Zhapa. In his later years, he moved permanently to Greece, where he built a range of large hotels in Athens.[73]

During his lifetime, he used a considerable part of his wealth to improve the public infrastructure of Korça. He built the water supply system and a series of drinking fountains, known in town as the Banka drinking fountains[74] and he established a gymnasium/high school, known until recently as the Lyceum of Banka.[75] He was also known for donating 25,000 grosh to the church of Korça. [76]

Before his death in 1905, Banka wrote his will, specifying that his wealth would be deposited in the National Bank of Athens. A portion of the interest was to be used to provide beds in two hospitals in Athens for patients from Korça, to fund a Greek orphanage to shelter girls from Korça, and to maintain the Bangjion Gymnasium in Korça. However, once again, the money did not reach its intended destination, and the Greek bank abused it.[77]

Even his elder brother, Jorgji Banka, who had accompanied him to Egypt, developed an extensive charitable activity. After his death in exile in 1859, he donated 25,000 grosh to the Mitropolis of Korça,[78] 50,000 grosh to the schools of Korça, and 25,000 grosh to the city of Athens.[79]

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[71]Ibid. 30-31.

[72]Ibid. 34-35.

[73]Ibid. 36.

[74] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 180, 87.

[75]Ibid. 34-36.

[76] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. I, doc. 9, 83.

[77] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 38-41.

[78] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. I, doc. 110, 188.

[79]Ibid. doc. 43, 123.

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, at the age of 40, due to his poor state of health, he wrote his will. According to the will, he donated part of his property to the Llaso of Korça to help poor girls marry and to support 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,[80] but we have no information on 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 the Korça immigrants who moved to Egypt and contributed to charitable activities.[81]

Another Korça immigrant, notable in the field of philanthropy is Mandi Terpo. Together with his brothers, Mandi immigrated to Wallachia, where he engaged in trade. The Terpo brothers were actively involved with the Albanian nationalist groups in Bucharest and were unwavering in their support of the Albanian National Movement.[82] However, Mandi was the most distinguished among them. His house was the place where the first Albanian school was opened.[83] In his will, drafted in 1892 at the age of 48, two years before his death, Mandi Terpo dedicated the majority of his wealth—an amount of 143,000 gold francs—to the publication of books in Albania and the development of the Albanian language.[84]

This is the first known case of an Albanian immigrant transcending local boundaries and extending the vision of his activities to a national level. Unfortunately, his relatives and the Romanian Parliament abused the money, so neither the Albanians nor their national cause benefited from the wealth of this patriot.

The long list of people from Korça contributing to charity includes immigrants to Greece, such as Vasil Caci, who immigrated to Piraeus. In 1873, he donated 100 English liras to the Llaso of Korça for opening a primary school in the town.[85] Pandeli and Konstandin Cale brothers, immigrants to Lamia, donated 1,000 Turkish liras to the Vëllazëria e Miqve të të Vobektëve society in 1873. Additionally, Ilia Cale, also an immigrant to Lamia, donated 100 liras to the Llaso of Korça after his death.[86]

Besides these notable individuals in Korça and its surroundings, there were several other personalities who made considerable contributions in the field of charity.

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[80] Ibid. vol. II, doc. 135, 42–46.

[81] Ibid. doc. 180, 87–88.

[82] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 43–44.

[83] Ibid. 45.

[84] Ibid. 97.

[85] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 169, 62.

[86] Ibid. doc. 180, 87.

Among them was Irakli Duro from Drenova, who built a girls' school in Korça and founded the Drenova Charitable Society, which aimed to aid the recovery of Drenova. He left 25,000 gold francs to build a hospital in Korça, but his will was never executed.[87]

Two other benefactors from Drenova were Nikola Kristo, a clergyman holding the position of the protopope, and his grandson Efthim Kristo. They donated 3,500 Turkish liras from their wealth to benefit their native village. Of this amount, 2,500 liras were distributed to the poor, and the remaining 1,000 liras were deposited in a bank in Bucharest, with the interest used to cover the expenses of the village school.[88]

One of the areas in the region of Korça with a great reputation for humanism and charity was Kolonja. Its residents have distinguished themselves in several aspects, including philanthropy. Llazar Gjergj Qiriazhi, from the village of Sorkovot, was one of many Kolonja natives who immigrated to Romania during the 19th century. After his death in 1915, he left in his will 100,000 lei to establish a school in his native village. [89]

Ali Zenel Dibra was another benefactor, from Pogradeci. Living in a strong education-loving environment, Dibra donated part of his wealth to education in his hometown immediately after World War I.[90]

Kristo Kotadi, another immigrant from Korça, made significant contributions to the development and progress of his native town. Immigrating as a child to Romania, he acquired great wealth. However, trade was not his only interest. He became involved in the Albanian National Movement based in Bucharest and contributed significantly 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 another 20,000 napoleons left by his brother-in-law Irakli Duro. However, the money was taken by Kristo Kotadi's sister, and the fund was not used for its intended purpose. [91]

Another Korça immigrant to Romania who left his wealth to charity was Dhionis Naum Ndine. In his will, written before he died in 1917, Ndine dedicated part of his wealth for the poor people of Korça. In 1922, the municipality of Korça decided to keep this amount deposited in a saving account until the value of the lei, which had fallen at that time, increased.[92]

Gaqo Avramushi from Korça was another immigrant to Egypt who, after his death, left a will, donating 1,000 liras to build a hospital in Korça.[93]

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[87] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 50-52.

[88] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 190, 189.

[89] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 60.

[90] Ibid. 58.

[91] Ibid. 55-56.

[92] CSA, fund 151, year 1923, d. 54, journal 2.

[93] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 52.

In the early 1920s, some Albanians living in Egypt tried to encourage the Korça municipality to address the issue of Gaqo Avramushi's testament, but these efforts were not successful.[94] This issue was resolved in 1937 when the Council of Ministers, in compliance with the law in force, received the gift. Instead of establishing a hospital, which had already been built in the city, they established a bacteriological laboratory.[95] This deeply rooted tradition in Korça continued with the same momentum in the following period. During this time, Korça remained 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 its share of benefactors, with Himara being particularly outstanding in the area of charitable activity. The residents of Bregu were among the first from this region to immigrate. Historically linked to the West, especially Italy, since the 15th century, Himara has maintained consistent connections with the outside world, much more so than other parts of the Vlora region. Like those from Korça and Gjirokastra, the residents of Bregu became wealthy while working in various parts of Europe and Egypt. They experienced the development of science and education and understood their value very early on. Vuno is one of the villages particularly notable among Himara villages. Three well-known benefactors came from this village, including Gjik Bixhili, who immigrated to Russia and became wealthy through trade. Since the end of the 19th century, he had built a school in his native village and paid the teacher's salary. 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.[96] Another well-known figure from the region involved in charitable activities was Nase Sheti. On the eve of the proclamation of Independence, he deposited money in the National Bank of Greece to help the clergy institutions of Vuno and to support the opening of schools in his native village. Unfortunately, this money was not used, and in the mid-1930s, after several failed requests by the people of Vuno to access the property, the issue was left unresolved.[97] Jani Dhima was another native of Himara 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. However, the testament disappeared, and his wealth was expropriated to hinder the development of education in this part of Albania.[98]

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[94] CSA, fund 424, year 1923, d. 301, journal 40.

[95] Official Journal, no. 59, 19 July, 1937, 2.

[96] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 189.

[97] Ibid. 189-190.

[98] Ibid. 191.

## Fletorja Zyrtare

Pa'itme : Per një mot në Shqipëri	Fr. ar. 12
Jaashita . . . . .	» » 20
Një copë e javës . . . . .	» » 0,20
» » » kalueme . . . . .	» » 1
Për numrat special caktohet herë pas here	
Lajmerim . . . . .	» » 10
Shpallje . . . . .	» » 10
Shpallje ankandë për një kolonë . . . . .	» » 5

Drejtimi : Ministri s.e P. të Mbrendëshme  
Redaksia s.e Fletores Zyrtare

TIRANË

Telef. Gjindarmeria Nr. 14

Redaktor : ZEF M. DAJÇI

Ministri kompetent ngarkohet me shpalljen dhe  
Urdhënohet për zbatimin e këtij Dekreti.

Durrës me 9 Korrik 1937.

Kryeministri :

K. Kotta d. v.

Z O G d. v.

Ministri i Financave  
K. Thaçi d. v.

## Pranim Dhurate

### Këshilli Ministrues

Vendim Nr. 741 me 2.7.1937

Këshilli Ministrues në mbledhjen e Tij të sot-  
shme të mbajtur nën Kryesinë e Z. Koço Kotta,  
Kryeministër e Z. Thoma Orologa, Ministri i Drejtësisë, Ekrem  
Libohova, Ministri P. të Jashtme, Musa Juka, Mi-  
nistri P. të Mbrendëshme, Kol Thaçi, Ministri i Fi-  
nancave, Faik Shatku, Ministri i Arsimit, Terenc  
Toçi, Ministri i Ekonomisë Kombëtare, pati në bise-  
dim shkresën Nr. 14/17 datë 24-VI-1937 të Drej-  
torisë P. të Shëndetësisë përcjellë me shkresën Nr.  
5866 datë 26.VI.1937 të Ministrisë së P. të Mbrend-  
ëshme, me të cilën tregon se i ndjeri Gaqi Avra-  
mushi, nga Korça, e banues në Kairo, në kohën e

fundit të jetës së tij me një shpirtë madhësi dhe  
me ndjenjat e patriotizmit humanitar me testa-  
ment të posaçëm ka dhuruar nga pasuria e tij një-  
mijë lira sterline për ngrehjen dhe pajosjen e një  
Laboratori Bakteriologjik në qytetin e Korçës në  
vend lindjen e tij, tue shenue si ekzekutor për  
kete testament vllanë e tij Vangjel Avramushi dhe  
ky i fundit ka emnue përfaqësues dhandrin e tij  
Z. Vasil Avramia Duputet i Korçës, dhe sikundër  
dihet 1000 lira sterline vlejné aproksimativisht 750  
napolona, e prej kësaj shume do të zbriten taksat  
relative të caktueme n'atë vend mbi trashëgiminë e  
dhuratat, dhe me këto baza në marrëveshje me  
Institutin Bakteriologjik të qendres e me përfaqë-  
suesin e ekzekutorit, e me një Injiniier kompetent,  
asht perplue plani i duhur ndertimi i të cilit nuk  
i kapërcen të 7000 fr. ari, dhe me tjerat do të kom-  
pl-tohet me veglat dhe instrumentat e nevojshme,  
e ma në fund për realizimin e këtij qëllimi kërkon :

I. Pranimin e kësaj dhurate;

II. Lejimin që kjo ndërtesë të ngrehet në tokat  
Shtetnore në zotimin e sotmë të Spitalit;

III. Për ngrehjen e kësaj godine të formohet një  
komision nën kryesinë e Prefektit, me antarë  
Kryetarin e Bashkisë, Drejtorin e Spitalit  
dhe Z. Vasil Avramit ose prej atij që ky do  
të delegojë;

IV. Ky komision të ketë të drejtë me adjunktatë  
ose me lehtësime privat ose si t'a shofin  
t'arsyeshme të kujdeset për ngrehjen e kësaj  
godine;

V. Për shenjë mirënjohëje dhe për ankurazhi-  
min në veprat të këllira bamirësije, në godinën  
që do ngrehet të shenohet në një pllakë të veçantë  
ngjitur në hyrje emri i dhuruesit të kësaj veprë,

V e n d o s i :

Pranimin e kësaj dhurate, dhe i a parashtron  
ketë Vendim Nalt Madhënisë së Tij Mbretit për  
dekretim, dhe mbasi të dekretohet autorizon Drej-  
torin e P. të Shëndetësisë me veprë si ma sipër  
për ngrehjen dhe kompletimin me instrumentat e  
nevojshme t'institutit të sipër-përmendur.

Z O G U L

Mbreti i Shqiptarëve

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

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

#### DEKRETON

Aprovimin e vendimit të sipër përmendun të Këshillit Ministruer, mbi pranimin e një dhurate prej 1.000 (një mijë) lira sterline, të lanuna me testament prej të ndjerit Gaqë Avramushi nga Korça, i cili banonte në Kairo, për ngrehjen dhe kompletimin e një laboratorit Bakteriologjik në Korçë dhe Urdhënon 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 njehershëm

##### Z O G U I.

Mbreti i Shqiptarve

Tue pamë vendimin 219 datë 18 VI-937 të Komisionit Pensjoneve, paraqitë me shkresën Nr. 1256/I datë 2-VII-937 të Kryesis së Këshillit Ministruer, si dhe art. 1 të Dekretit Ligjës datë 1-II-937 dhe art. 55 të ligjës së pensjoneve civilë dhe ushtarake me datë 20 VI-934,

#### DEKRETON

Aprovimin e vendimit të sipër përmendun të Komisionit të Pensjoneve, mbi akordimin e shperblimit të njehershëm prej frari 1500. njëmijë e pesë qind), Z. Hamdi Qesku, ish polic i mbetur jashta kuadrit në Qershuer 1935 dhe i vuem në dispozicion, dhe urdhënon zbatimin e tij.

Durrës, me 9 Korrik 1937.

Z O G. d. v.

Kryeministri:

K. Kotta d. v.

Ministri i Financave:

Kol Thaçi d. v.

#### Shperblim i njehershëm

##### Këshillit Ministruer

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

Këshilli Ministruer në mbledhjen e Tij të sotshme të mbajtur nën Kryesinë e Z. Koço Kotta, Kryeministër e Zv. Ministri P. Boiore, me anëtarë Z. Z. Thoma Orologa, Ministri i Drejtësisë, Ekrem Libohova, Ministri i P. të Jashtme, Musa Juka, Ministri P. të Mbrendshme, Kol Thaçi, 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 Këlcyrës, i mbetur jashta kuadrit, nuk do të merret ma në shërbim prej asaj Ministrisë, proponon që të përmendunt t'i akordohet shpërblimi i njehershëm, mbasi e ka plotsuem kohën e shërbimit të lypun prej ligjës së pensjoneve për këtë qëllim.

##### Vendos i:

Pranimin e këtij propozimi, tue konstatue në bazë të propozimit të sipër-përmendun të Ministris së P. të Mbrendshme se, i nënt-përmendunt nuk do të merret ma në shërbim të Shtetit, dhe autorizon Drejtorin e Pensjoneve me shqyrtuem imëtisht dokumentat e shërbimit të tij, dhe në rast se ka gjithë konditat ligjore të lypuna, me kryem veprimet e duhuna për t'i akorduem shpërblimin e njehershëm.

#### PROGRAM - PUNIMI

i

#### Ministris së Ekonomis Kombtare mbas

##### Buxhetit të Jashtëzakonshëm

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

Për bonifikime e vaditje parashikohen veprime për t'u krye e për të cilat janë në mbarim studimet, si dhe studime që kanë me fillue ndër ato vise ku popullsija vëjnë nga mungesa e prodhimit. Tue pasë për bazë këtë parim, është fillue nga pasirimi e ndreqja e kanalit Krasniqes. Nikaj-Mertur; atë të kanalit të Qashit të gjitha këta në Pre-

### 1.4.5 Region of Berati



The region of Berat also had well-known individuals who contributed to charity during this period. One of them was Abdulla Bey Koprencka, who contributed cash to the development of education in Berat.[99] Another notable figure was the distinguished patriot Jorgji Karbunara, also known as Bab Dud Karbunara, a prominent merchant from Berat who dedicated a property in Vlora worth 13,000 gold francs to the service of the school in the Castle neighborhood of Berat.[100] Documents show that before the proclamation of independence, other benefactors from

Berat were Thanas Gega, who donated a bakery, with its profits used for the schools of Berat, and Harallambi Tutulani, who donated a warehouse for the same purpose.[101] Berat immigrants were also involved in charitable activities, especially in the field of education. One of them was Kol Poshnja, who lived in Egypt and deposited a substantial amount of money in a Greek bank, for the advancement of education in Berat. [102] In 1919, a group of citizens from Berat, including Azis Pashë Vrioni, Sami Bej Vrioni, Faik Sanxhaktari, Teki Selenica, Qani Bej Zhabokika, Veli Libohova, Vasil Nushi, Thoma Çapo, Vasil Bakalli, and others, donated an amount of 275 gold crowns to improve public infrastructure in the town of Berati.[103]

### 1.4.6 Regions of Central Albania

Unfortunately, and perhaps due to a lack of documentation, we observe that in the northern regions, during the period we are studying, charitable activity falls significantly. As explained in the introduction of this study, this might be a consequence of an economic and social structure that did not support the development of such activities. The population in this part of Albania, except for the city of Shkodra, did not have the same mobility as in the south of the country. Attempts at change were meek, and the population was much more conservative and skeptical about embracing modernity.

[99] Ibid. 148–149.

[100] Ibid. 148.

[101] CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, journal 47.

[102] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 149–150.

[103] CSA, fund 195, year 1919, d. 31, journal 1.

In this region, with some exceptions such as Elbasan and Shkodra, the National Movement and efforts for cultural emancipation were weaker. This, combined with the extremely important role played in social, political, and economic life by beys, bajraktars, and conservative Muslim clergy, created serious obstacles to advancing these processes in Central and Northern Albania.

Given that charitable activity during this period was closely associated with modernization and nationalism, it is understandable that individuals in these regions encountered difficulties in performing charitable and philanthropic work. Moreover, considering that these individuals were generally from the middle class of entrepreneurs, who, with few exceptions, were completely undeveloped in these parts of Albania, they were 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.

The name of Ali Adil Agjah Bej Bıçakçiu stands out as the earliest and greatest philanthropist from Elbasan. A leader of the Albanian National Movement, Ali Bey Bıçakçiu was persecuted by Esat Pashë Toptani in 1914 and fled to Italy. Seriously ill, he returned to Vlora in 1918, where he died. In his testament written in Rome on June 4, 1918, he donated all his wealth to Albanian national education, encouraging his heirs to relinquish the property for this cause.<sup>[104]</sup> This was the first and last philanthropic event of such magnitude. It was the first instance when an Albanian dedicated all his wealth to education and the first case when an entire estate was left to national education. This act acquires even greater importance considering that Ali Adil Agjah Bej Bıçakçiu came from the ranks of the beys. According to the data we possess from the year 1909, Haxhi Ahmeti from Durrës left a third of his property to the development of education in his hometown.<sup>[105]</sup>

Tirana exhibits some of the most outstanding examples of philanthropy, particularly the descendants of the Toptani family, Sermedi Said Toptani and Murat Toptani. Educated in Paris, they were not typical representatives of their class. With a much more prominent vision than many of their contemporaries, 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 nationalist society Bashkimi. Additionally, these famous exponents of Tirana families performed charity for poor families in their town.<sup>[106]</sup>

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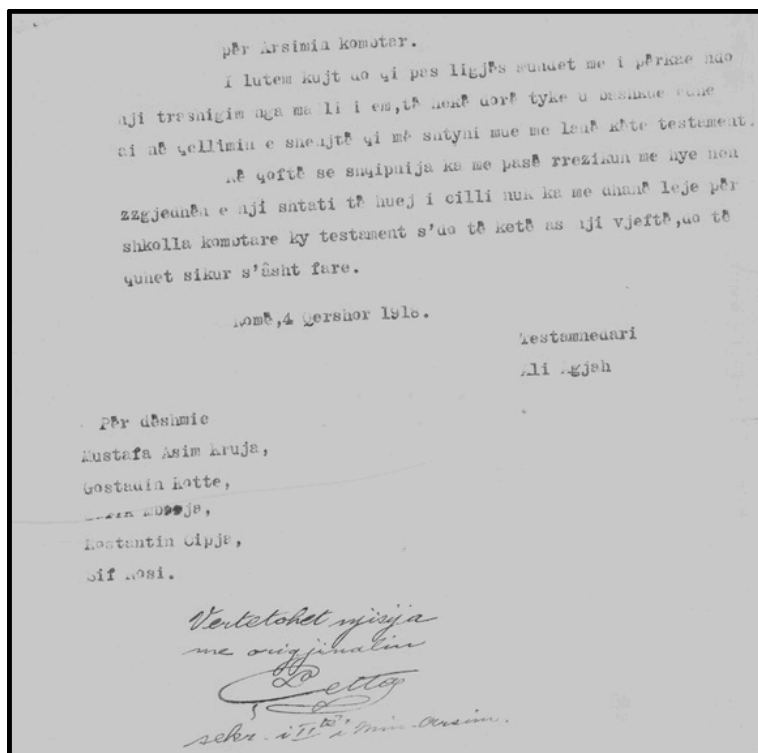
[104]CSA, fund 195, year 1918, d. 62, journal 1.

[105] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 151.

[106]Ibid. 172-173.



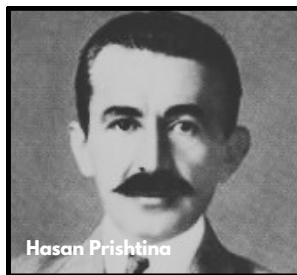
Other notable contributors to charity in Tirana were Jusuf and Osman Elezi, who descended from a wealthy family of merchants in this city. Partnering with the National Movement and supporting the modernization of the country, especially the development of national education, both cousins financed the establishment of several Albanian schools, including a girls' school,[107] which was significant considering the closed and conservative mentality of Tirana at that time. While Osman continued his charitable activities in later years, Jusuf became involved in politics and experienced a series of vicissitudes that impeded the continuation of his charitable activities.



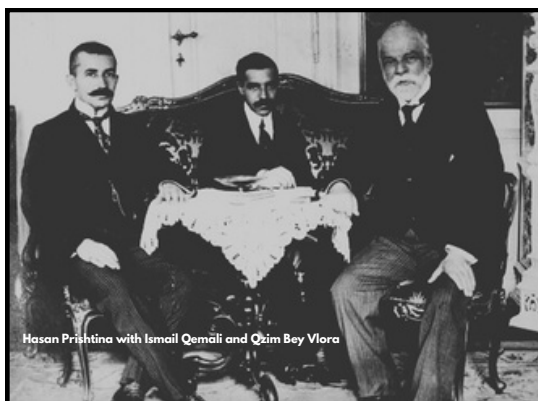
The will of Ali Adil Agjah Bey Biçakçiu, obtained from the AĖC, fund 195, year 1918, d.62, folio 1.

[107]Ibid. 174.

Another famous personality is Imam Zyber Hallulli, who, as the mayor of Tirana, opened the first orphanage in Albania on November 28, 1917, with the support of the Austrian authorities who controlled this part of Albania at that time.[108] During the period of our study, in the region of Dibra, we could mention Ismail Pasha, an 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. 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 parliament for the development of education in Albania. Hasan Prishtina continued this activity in the following years to support Albanian education, especially in Kosovo.[109] As observed, in Central and Northern Albania, we encounter cases of descendants of large bey families involved in charity. They were part of the nationalist movement, and their charitable deeds were closely related to their ideals for the independence of Albania and its development as an independent state.



Regarding 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 included Kulaç Begu and Zef Zorba, who founded the construction of bridges and roads, and causeway repairs, as well as Kol Kryqiti and Filip Pema, who contributed to building a hospital in Shkodra.[110] Additionally, we should mention the active role played by the charitable societies organized by the Catholic clergy.



[108] Pirro Gjerasi, *Orphanages of Albania*, Tirana: FLESH, 1999, 14.

[109] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 167.

[110] Ibid. 168-169.

## **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 several 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. 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 charitable societies in the Albanian territories was not a novelty. The tradition of these societies had existed long before, especially in urban centers, where craftsmen had funds used for charitable purposes.

Although initially limited to particular professional groups within the context of craftsmanship, these activities served as a powerful basis for overcoming barriers and extending charity to a wider context. One such instance was documented in Korça in 1785, when a number of craftsmen raised funds to open a boys' school accessible to everyone. The opening of this school was also supported by the wealthy individuals of Korça.

Therefore, charitable and philanthropic activity for education served as one of the first forms of coordinated charitable activity among various professional groups. This marked, or better reflected, the beginning of changes in civic life, the social structure of the urban population, and consequently, the identity of the groups. Other charitable societies founded during the 19th century also developed in this context.

These societies were generally established in urban centers or nearby villages connected with city markets, or in centers with significant immigration, i.e., in those centers that had transitioned from a subsistence economy to a market economy. This transition provided them with the ability to accumulate capital and generate funds for charitable activities. It should be highlighted that these societies preserved their narrow local or religious character concerning both their composition and activity scope. There were also charitable societies founded by religious institutions, but it should be noted that they were primarily constrained to the ranks of the Catholic Church.

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

Korça occupies a place of honor when it comes to the foundation of charitable societies. Donations and constant support for the improvement of city life had developed since the 18th century and continued into the following century. In 1831, the residents of Varoshi of Korça decided to use the money received from the annual interest of a loan given to the church for the city school.[111]

In 1857, the Korça Orthodox community collected funds for the construction of a girls' school.[112] Based on the data we have identified, most of these societies primarily 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.[113]

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[111] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. I, doc. 21, 111.

[112] Ibid. doc. 45, 125

[113] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 21.

The first documented meeting of this society was held in 1849,[114] but according to memoirs, it had been founded as early as 1830.[115] Meanwhile, its charter dates back to 1875.[116]

Llaso's tasks were to cover the expenses for maintaining the town's schools [117] and paying teacher salaries,[118] as well as spreading education in the Greek language to the entire population in town.[119] To increase the fund, cover all expenses, and ensure the implementation of all projects, Llaso had the right to access all surplus created by donations made to the Orthodox religious institutions.[120] Money and real estate were deposited in the fund by most of the Korça Orthodox community, and almost all elderly people left money to Llaso in their wills.[121] Immigrants from Korça to Egypt were also expected to contribute to fundraising.[122]

Regarding 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[123] in Korça and to develop their curricula in cooperation with the teachers.[124]

Documents show that the Voskopoja diaspora, which held a powerful economic position even after the demolition of the town, deposited an amount of money in the Bank of Sina in 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.[125]

In 1870, the Vëllazëria e miqve të të vobektëve society was founded, aiming to assist the poor regardless of their religion or nationality.[126] This inclusivity was reflected in its composition as well, with membership not being conditioned by profession or religion, making it a true philanthropic society. Its activities involved not only providing assistance to the poor but also supporting the opening of a number of schools in the region of Korça. [127]

The Young Turk revolution in 1908 led Albanian patriots to believe that new opportunities for the development of education in the Albanian language had opened up.

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[114] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. I, doc. 46, 125.

[115] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 21.

[116] Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, *Canons of Albanian Societies [1870–1936]*, Tirana: General Directorate of Archives, 2007, doc. 3, 27.

[117] Ibid. article 1, 23.

[118] Ibid. article 9, 24.

[119] Ibid. article 2, 23.

[120] Ibid. article 9, 24.

[121] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 21.

[122] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. I, doc. 46, 125.

[123] P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 3, article 1, 25.

[124] Ibid. article 8, 26

[125] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol. II, doc. 189, 93.

[126] P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 1, article 1, 15.

[127] Ibid. 18.

The proclamation of the Constitution and the dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II signaled significant changes for the peoples of the Ottoman Empire. These changes had an immediate impact on the Albanian territories. A series of educational and patriotic societies were founded, among which were hybrid societies that combined educational and patriotic goals with charitable ones. An example is Klubi i Diturisë Shqipe, founded on 15 September 1908, whose aim was to open Albanian schools throughout the country and publish books for them.[128]

Similar to Klubi i Diturisë Shqipe was another educational and charitable society in Korça, Përparimi, which aimed to enforce the decisions of the Congress of Elbasani for opening Albanian schools in the town of Korça.[129] Another local educational and charitable society was Shoqëria Shkollë 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, and to send Albanian students to European universities to study pedagogy, philology, business, and agriculture.[130] This society was open to all who aspired to the education of Albanian young people, including foreigners.[131]

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's public infrastructure.[132] Membership in this society was open to all Orthodox people living in the region of Korça.[133]

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

As previously mentioned, Përmeti was an area with a strong passion for education. The poverty of the region hindered the development of education and the establishment of schools[134], but this did not stop the people of Përmeti from raising 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.[135] Several Përmeti immigrants, who had acquired wealth abroad, donated money to the Llaso coffer. However, Llaso was not run solely on the money raised by them. In 1847, the town residents raised funds and built a girls' school, also supported by Përmeti people who had immigrated to Istanbul.[136]

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[128]Ibid. doc. 34, article 30 & 35, 123.

[129]Ibid. doc. 43, article 2, 147.

[130]Ibid. doc. 54, article 2, 187.

[131]Ibid. article 3, 187.

[132]Ibid. doc. 55, article 1, 191.

[133]Ibid. article 5, 191.

[134] Petraq Pepo, cited document, vol.II, doc. 198, 98.

[135]Ibid. doc. 199, 99.

[136]Ibid. doc. 198, 99.

### **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 the patriotic movement in the region. It was founded based on the Manastiri club, Bashkimi, and it made a considerable contribution to the development of education and culture in Gjirokastra.[137]

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

The Balkan War not only transformed Albanian territories into a war zone but also made the Albanian population victims of unprecedented massacres, to which the civilized world remained indifferent. The population of southern Albania was targeted by the Greek armies, which aimed to annex entire regions of the south. They followed a policy of burning areas, and under the pressure of bayonets and troops mobilized for 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 the women of Vlora to found a women's charitable society, headed by the wife of Syrja Bej Vlora. This society aimed to collect aid for people who had relocated to Vlora from other regions of southern Albania and who were living under miserable conditions.[138]

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

The charitable and philanthropic societies in the area of Shkodra were mainly founded on the initiative of the Catholic clergy. Their activity in support of people in need was comprehensive, and in many aspects, it was the forerunner of the establishment of institutions serving such purposes. In 1877, the Saint Francesk Saverio College was set up with the encouragement of the Shkodra Catholic societies, with the purpose of caring for orphaned children. This college received material support from the Catholic circles of the large urban center of northwestern Albania until 1889, when it began to be funded by the Austrian authorities.[139]

By the end of the war, this college also established an orphanage called Zemra e Shenjtë. This orphanage was initially funded by Italian benefactors and later received support from the Italian government.[140]

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[137] Albanian patriotic societies abroad for education and national culture [1879 – 1912], Tirana: 8 November, 1987, doc. 229, 307.

[138] CSA, fund 447, year 1914, d. 205, journal 1.

[139] Pirro Gjerasi, cited document, 16.

[140] Ibid. 17.

A charitable and philanthropic society, Kongregacioni i Zojës së Papërlyeme, was founded on 10 March 1880, with the aim of assisting the poor people in town<sup>[141]</sup> and educating young people in the spirit of Catholic morality.<sup>[142]</sup> In 1889, one of these Catholic societies, Rrethi i Shën Jozefit, was founded to help street children, and a canteen was also put into operation. Other charitable societies included Shën Rozario, founded by the Franciscan priests, and Të bijat e Maries, founded by the Stigmatine Sisters. A significant contribution was also made by the charitable society Buka e Sh'na Nout, founded in 1897, which distributed aid to the poor equal in value to 500,000 liras of that time until 1910.<sup>[143]</sup>

When discussing charitable societies, Gruaja Shqiptare, founded on 2 August 1920, should also be mentioned. 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 subsequent 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, with the aim of helping the Albanian soldiers fighting in the north of the country.<sup>[144]</sup> This society was open to everyone, and its membership was not based on religion, as evidenced by the diverse 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, with the colony in Romania being especially outstanding. After the suppression of the Albanian League of Prizren, the activities of the patriotic unions relocated completely to the Albanian diaspora. These activities were 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 for the standardization of the Albanian language.

The expansion and intensification of cultural work and education in the Albanian language were seen as the main means to develop Albanian national feelings.

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[141] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 169.

[142] P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 61/1, 220–223.

[143] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 169.

[144] P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 105, article 2, 423.

Albanian patriotic intellectuals found the support they lacked in Albania to fulfill their dreams of establishing an Albanian nation-state and preventing the potential partition of Albanian lands among neighboring countries. Under these circumstances, the Albanian community in Romania played an important role and made 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 with patriotic goals and charitable elements were founded. They raised funds with the aim of spreading knowledge, printing books, and opening schools. These societies had no materialistic interests, and thus, mentioning them as part of this study is incontestable.

Although the activities of these societies had a wide range of aims and their scope went beyond narrow regional or religious contexts to take on a wider, more national character, societies with narrower and more local aims were also present. Not all the societies founded had patriotic goals. There were cases where origin and religion were the basic factors that connected and urged immigrants to create these charitable organizations. The support for one another 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, founded in Bucharest in 1884. Its aim was to finance publications in the Albanian language and build Albanian schools in Albanian territories.<sup>[145]</sup> Membership in this society was limited to Albanians or people of Albanian descent regardless of their religion, whereas for persons of non-Albanian nationality, admission was based on a consultative vote.<sup>[146]</sup> Another philanthropic and patriotic society founded in Bucharest was Dituria, which had the same aims as Drita's.<sup>[147]</sup> After resolving numerous disagreements within the Albanian community of Bucharest, these two societies eventually united with another society, Shpresa, on 7 December 1906, to form a single society called Bashkimi.<sup>[148]</sup> Bashkimi retained the same goals as the societies that constituted it, focusing on the development of education and the free distribution of books.<sup>[149]</sup>

Another cultural society named Shoqëria Kulturore Shqiptare Bashkimi was founded in the Romanian city of Constanta in early January 1910. Besides the efforts to unite Albanians regardless of religion,<sup>[150]</sup> it also aimed at raising funds to open Albanian schools in Albania.<sup>[151]</sup>

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[145] Ibid. doc. 10, article 2 and 3, 31.

[146] Ibid. article 7, 32.

[147] Ibid. doc. 24, article 3, 53.

[148] Ibid. doc. 117, 178–179.

[149] Ibid. doc. 119, article 2 and 3, 180.

[150] Ibid. doc. 221, article. 1, 294.

[151] Ibid.

The mixture of nationalism, following the Western model, and charity is evident in the charter of this society. Besides opening schools, it stated that society would recognize only the Latin alphabet approved by the Congress of Manastiri.[152] The recognition of this alphabet, beyond practical reasons, had great symbolic value, as it indicated the future orientation this organization wanted for the country. A religious and patriotic society called Komuniteti Ortodoks Shqiptar i Bukureshtit was founded on 23 February 1915 in the Romanian capital. Its aims were to finance the maintenance of the Albanian Orthodox Church in Bucharest, support religious education [153] through scholarships, and help publish religious books and necessary religious didactics in Albanian.[154] Another goal was to open a school that taught in the Albanian language.[155] As mentioned above, besides philanthropic societies with educational and patriotic goals, other locally-based charitable organizations were also created in Romania. Among the first societies of this kind was Vëllazëria e Boboshticarëve, founded in Bucharest on 1 January 1894. This philanthropic society aimed to improve the public infrastructure of the Boboshtica commune and carry out charity exclusively for people from Boboshtica.[156] Only individuals from Boboshtica or their descendants could join this society.[157]

On April 1 of the same year, another locally-based philanthropic society named Drenova was founded, initiated by Irakli Duro. This society had similar goals to the Boboshtica society,[158] but its objectives were broader, including education.[159] Unlike the Boboshtica society, the Drenova society was open to anyone who wanted to join, regardless of their nationality.[160] In 1905, again in Bucharest, immigrants from the village of Dardha in Korça, in cooperation with their co-villagers who had immigrated to the USA, founded the Dardha Charity Society. This society aimed to help the poor and orphans of the village. Membership in this society was restricted to people from Dardha, regardless of where they lived.[161]

Another locally based philanthropic society was Shën Gjergji, founded in Braila on 19 April 1919 by emigrants from the village of Negovan.[162] Unlike the two above-mentioned societies, this one called itself an Albanian-Romanian society, aiming to carry out charity for the residents of Negovan village.[163] This society was very inclusive and allowed anyone to join, regardless of their nationality. [164]

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[152]Ibid. article 53, 299.

[153]Ibid. doc. 68, article 2, 260.

[154]Ibid. article 3, 260.

[155]Ibid. article 2, 260.

[156]Ibid. doc. 13, article 3, 54.

[157]Ibid. article 4, 54.

[158]Po aty, dok. 14, 61.

[159]Ibid. article 2.

[160]Ibid. article 5.

[161]Ibid. doc. 23, article 2, 84.

[162]Ibid. doc. 44, 150.

[163]Ibid. article 1, 150.

[164]Ibid. article 3, 150.

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

Philanthropic societies were also founded in other Balkan countries. 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. [165] Another society, Ndihmëtarja, was founded on 1 March 1908 in Sofia. Its goal was to provide financial support for the activities of Albanian nationalists.[166]

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

Albanian philanthropic societies were founded in several Western European countries, generally where groups of Albanian students and immigrants congregated. In 1898, perhaps on Faik Konica's initiative, Përlindja e Shqiptarëve was founded in Brussels. Its aim was to open national schools in Albania and to print and distribute books in Albanian to enrich and consolidate the Albanian language.[167] The main goal of this society was to open Albanian schools in bordering territories where Albanians lived, and where the propaganda of Balkan monarchies was more intense.[168]

Another society, called Dijs, was founded in Vienna on 27 December 1904[169] on the initiative of the famous patriot from Shkodra, Hil Mosi.[170] The aim of its founders was to print and distribute books in Albanian in all Albanian territories.[171]

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

According to the available documents, the first Albanian philanthropic society founded in the diaspora was Arsime-dashja. 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 to all those who valued them.[172] Albanians living in Thessaloniki could join this society, and by decision of the presidency, foreigners could also join as long as they supported the society's goals.[173]

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[165]Ibid. doc. 12, article 2, 49.

[166]Patriotic Societies..., doc. 171, 238–239.

[167] Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, cited document, doc. 17, article 1, 70.

[168]Ibid. article 7, 71.

[169]Ibi. doc. 27, 102.

[170]Shoqëritë patriotike..., doc. 121, 186.

[171]Ibid. 187.

[172]Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, cited document, doc. 2, article 1, 19.

[173]Ibid. article 2, 104.

Egypt was an important center in the Ottoman Empire where Albanian societies of all kinds thrived. Because they were ruled by Mehmet Ali Pasha's 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 known societies for their philanthropic nature was Mirëbërëse, which was founded around 1908 in Fashnjë,[174] and led by Loni Ligori.[175] Mirëbërëse 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 and support for various patriots, such as Bajo Topulli.[176]

Another society of a philanthropic and patriotic nature was the Bashkimi Brotherhood, founded on 12 December 1910 on the initiative of Sotir Kolea and Loni Naçi, and joined by many other famous personalities, such as Dr. Adhamidhi and Mihal Turtulli.[177] This society, which extensively supported the national cause, aimed at opening Albanian schools in Albania and abroad.[178] It raised funds and distributed money not only for the region of Korça but also for Negovani and the Albanian educational society of Braila.[179]

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

Starting from the beginning of the 20th century, the United States of America became one of the main centers of the Albanian diaspora and would soon play a remarkable role in the history of Albania. Albanians found in the USA not only a place where they could become prosperous but also a source of inspiration and a model for their country. The increasing number of Albanians in the USA further elevated the role of this segment of the Albanian diaspora. Finding themselves in a large and foreign country, it did not take long for the Albanians to organize themselves into societies, which initially were local and aimed at achieving solidarity on regional and religious bases.

Over time, as a result of the efforts of Albanian nationalists who went to the New World with the intention of organizing and coordinating the numerous societies spread across the eastern part of the USA, these societies began to differ in terms of size, inclusiveness, and aims.

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[174] Patriotic societies..., doc. 166,237–238.

[175] CSA, fund 97, year 1908, d. 23, journal 1.

[176] CSA, fund 97, year 1908, d. 39, journal 1–2.

[177] CSA, fund 97, year 1928, d. 22, journal 4.

[178] Petraq Pepo, Mihallaq Pela, cited document, doc. 48, article 3, 163.

[179] CSA, fund 97, year 1912, d. 73, journal 2.

Among the first societies founded in America was Vëllazëria Mirëbërëse e Dardhës, established on 1 January 1905 in Boston. The aim of this brotherhood was to maintain the public infrastructure and schools in Dardha and to support people from Dardha living in the USA.[180]

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.[181] Due to disagreements within the society, the Patriotic Society of Dardha was founded in 1906, with aims identical to those of the original society. After resolving their disagreements in 1910, these two societies merged to form Vëllazëria Mirëbërëse Patriotike. The program of this newly established society was no different from that of the two societies from which it was created.[182] This society was very active and cooperated with the Vatra Federation to gather and distribute aid to the poor people in Dardha, as well as to improve the public infrastructure of Dardha. On 3 November 1918, this society was reorganized and named Mbleta.[183] In spite of preserving its local nature, one can observe that its interests expanded compared to the previous societies. One of the objectives of Mbleta was to help Albanian schools, with no regional preference. However, its local nature was still present and could be seen in its aim to improve Dardha's infrastructure.[184] This society held a wide philanthropic activity in the years 1920-1930s.

Among the societies started by Albanian immigrants in the USA, there were also those of a charitable and educational nature. In 1906, in Jamestown, Buffalo, on the initiative and encouragement of the famous Albanian patriot Petro Nini Luarasi, Malli i Mëmëdheut was founded. Its aim was to print books in Albanian to spread civilization and increase fraternity among Albanians.[185]

The nationwide character of this society was evident in the fact that anyone could join, regardless of nationality,[186] but only Albanians could be elected to the leadership positions.[187] 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.[188]

This society published its own journal, *Dielli*[189] which is significant 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.

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[180]Ibid. doc. 23, article 2, 82.

[181]Ibid. article 4, 82.

[182]Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 63.

[183]Ibid. 64.

[184]P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 82, article 2, 307.

[185]Ibid. doc. 26, article 3, 97.

[186]Ibid. article 5, 97.

[187]Ibid. article 6, 97.

[188] Valentina Duka, "The National Movement in the Albanian Diaspora", Ibid. 28–29.

[189] Valentina Duka, "The Circumstances That Led to the Establishment of 'Vatra'", Issues in Contemporary History of Albanians, Tirana: ShBLU, 2008, 46.

This society aimed to educate Albanian youngsters in the USA and support distinguished Albanian students in the best American schools, encouraging them to return to Albania as teachers to disseminate knowledge and develop education and Albanian literature through journals, books, and other means. [190] It was open to all Albanians regardless of their religion or origin. The society *Djell i Shqipërisë* [191] was founded on 19 September 1909 in Southbridge, Massachusetts, with the same aim: to print and distribute books for Albanian schools in Albania. It was also open to all Albanians, regardless of their religion or origin. [192]

In 1909, the *Korça* society *Arsimi* was founded in Boston. Although it had patriotic goals, its scope was local in terms of inclusion and the territory where it would implement its activities. Its hybrid nature was also evident in its mission to serve as a center to help all people from *Korça* living in Boston. One of its goals was to develop education in Albanian and to support all members from *Korça* living in the city where the society was founded. [193]

This society was reformed on 30 August 1919. It preserved its local nature in terms of its composition and continued to be a society for the people of *Korça* living in America. However, this time, it aimed to support the development of education throughout the entire country. [194]

This society represents a shift from regional thinking to a broader phase of charitable work, aiming to seek the well-being not only of a small group of people but of the entire nation. However, this did not mark the end of the establishment of locally-based societies. As will be seen further, the process of founding societies of a regional nature continued. Other societies were also established in the area of education. One of these was founded in 1917 by immigrants from *Gjirokastra* living in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and it was named *Drita*. Its aim was to provide financial support for the *Drita* school in *Gjirokastra*. [195]

While the above-mentioned society had a local nature, like many other societies, there were also societies whose scope of work extended beyond regional borders. One such society was *Lidhja e Studentëve Shqiptarë*, founded in Springfield, Massachusetts. Its aim was to spread knowledge through education in Albania. This objective was clearly expressed in its charter, which emphasized that the society would help Albanian students continue their studies and encourage youngsters in Albania to pursue education, thereby spreading education throughout the country. [196]

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[190] Patriotic Societies..., doc. 135, 202.

[191] Ibid. doc. 197, article 2, 265.

[192] Ibid. article 1, 265.

[193] P. Pepo, M. Pela, cited document, doc. 37, article 1, 132.

[194] Ibid. doc. 96, 379.

[195] Ibid. doc. 76, article 6, 282.

[196] Ibid. doc. 79, article 2, 299.

# *The Oldest Albanian Newspaper*

*In Existence Since 1909*

*In English*



*and Albanian*



Returning to societies established on narrow geographical bases, we should mention Vëllazëria e Vithkuqit society, founded in Southbridge, Massachusetts by immigrants from Vithkuqi. Solidarity on a local basis and a strong connection with their place of birth were the factors that drove these immigrants to establish this society, and these motivations are clearly expressed in Article 1 of its charter.[197]

The basis for such grouping was stipulated in Article 2, where immigrants stated that their main goal was the development of Vithkuqi[198] as their main goal. The expressed goals included supporting the development of education in the village,[199] improving public infrastructure such as roads, churches, and monasteries, and protecting and even expanding village borders.[200] Solidarity, mutual help, and supporting people in need from Vithkuqi, as well as welcoming them to the USA as immigrants[201] were reflections of its primary goal.

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[197]Ibid. doc. 47, article 1, 159.

[198]Ibid. article 2, 159.

[199]Ibid. article 6, 159.

[200]Ibid. article 7, 159.

[201]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 and renamed Bashkimi, with the aim of carrying out charitable activities in Drenova and helping all people in need from Drenova. [202] It is also worth mentioning the Bashkimi philanthropic society founded in July 1919 by the residents of Shalësi village. The aims of this society were modest, focusing on supplying their village with potable water.[203]

Another local society was Bashkimi i Pogradecarëve, founded in Southbridge on 1 August 1915. Similar to the previous cases, love for their home country and regional solidarity united and motivated them to found this society. The aim of this society was to help the city of their origin and to support each other whenever they were in need.[204]

In 1919, the Bashkimi society of Drenova immigrants living in America was established. Its aims were universal and connected to the Drenova community. The society aimed to set up the Drenova village club, help develop agriculture, reproduce land patents, facilitate the needs of co-villagers, and support the establishment of schools in the village.[205]

A similar example was followed by immigrants from Leskoviku, who had settled in Worcester, Massachusetts. They founded the educational and philanthropic society Jani Vreto on 31 May 1919. The goals of this society were very broad and included fostering love for each other, opening schools, establishing a bookshop, delivering free textbooks and newspapers in Albanian, and supporting orphans.[206] On 22 November 1919, in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Çamëria society was founded. Its goals included the education of youngsters from Çamëria, the eradication of ignorance, and the protection of the Çamëria territories from being separated from Albania. [207]

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[202]Ibid. doc. 62, 224.

[203]Ibid. doc. 92, article 1, 356.

[204]Ibid. article 4, 264.

[205]Ibid. doc. 102, 414–417.

[206]Ibid. doc. 91, 350.

[207] CSA, fund 447, year 1919, d. 260, journal 3–4.

## **2. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN 1920–1990**

### ***2.1 Charity and philanthropy in 1920–1939***

After the establishment of the Albanian state, significant changes occurred in the curve of charitable and philanthropic activity compared to the previous period. The old and the new coexisted, giving these activities distinct features compared to before. First, the establishment of the Albanian state broke the connection between charity and philanthropy with nationalism, which had been the main feature of this activity until 1920.

The emergence of the Albanian state on the historical stage considerably decreased philanthropic activity, especially in the field of education. By this time, the state was considered the main actor responsible for addressing the social needs of the country. This shift has a logical explanation. The different features of this activity during these two periods do not go beyond the logic that inspired charitable and philanthropic activity during the second half of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century.

The majority of charitable and philanthropic activity during the last period of Ottoman administration in Albanian territories had developed within the context of the Albanian National Movement. It aimed to develop education and the so-called enlightenment of the Albanian people to endorse nationalism and provide help from Albanians who supported the idea of the nation-state. However, after achieving its goal with the establishment of the Albanian state, the responsibility for education and enlightenment was transferred to the state. From this moment, charity and philanthropy ceased to be part of the National Movement, as this movement had achieved its primary objective.

Once the Albanian state was created, even though the Albanian issue was still pending, the Albanian National Movement ceased to exist, and charity and philanthropy of a nationalistic nature also stopped. The tasks that were once carried out by dedicated members or societies founded to support the Albanian National Movement were now left to the state. Previously, education and efforts to distribute books in Albanian were carried out by activists or structures supporting the ideal of Albanian nationalism, primarily because the Albanian state did not exist. However, with the establishment of the state, it became its duty to handle these responsibilities. While there were still numerous donations supporting education, they were not as substantial or as frequent as in the past. However, it was not only the lack of interest from immigrants or wealthy Albanians in carrying out charity and philanthropic activities in the field of education.

The Albanian state was also not willing to support such private initiatives in the education sector. The new Albanian state faced the significant challenge of uniting Albanians and moving beyond local identities to forge a national identity. In this context, education gained extraordinary importance, as it was the primary means through which this vital task, essential for the longevity of the Albanian state, could be accomplished.[208]

Under such circumstances, education became secular and came entirely 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." [209] The state controlled education so zealously that it left little space for private investments or donations, fearing they might be used for anti-national purposes.

However, during 1920-1924, the Albanian governments, considering their difficult financial situation, began to show interest in taking possession of the money left through wills by various Albanians who had become wealthy while abroad. Starting from 1924, the financial situation of the Albanian state improved. However, the fear of foreign educational influences, especially Italian education, led Ahmet Zogu and the Minister of Education, Mirash Ivanaj, to pass a law in 1932 that closed foreign schools and forbade Albanian students from attending them.[210] This law disrupted the financing of educational institutions within the territory of the Albanian Kingdom from sources not controlled by the Albanian state. From that moment, donations for education were accepted only with approval from the Albanian government and the King. After 1925, the Albanian state was less inclined to stimulate philanthropic activities in the field of education, a sector it wanted to keep under tight control. During this period, efforts to address societal issues, particularly those related to urban life such as begging, homelessness, orphaned children, and hygiene, began to occupy an increasingly important place. Health and the establishment of health centers also gained the attention of Albanian philanthropists and benefactors.

An examination of documents related to the period between the two world wars reveals not just a review of the objectives and aims of charitable and philanthropic societies, but also a reallocation of attention, donations, and funds intended for such activities. The decrease in donations for the development of education was not matched by a corresponding increase in donations and activities of charitable and philanthropic societies in other areas. What we observe is that after 1920, *there was a general decline in charitable and philanthropic activities*. The scope of this activity was reduced compared to the preceding period.

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[208] 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.

[209] Laws, Decrees-Laws and Regulations of 1928, vol.5, Tirana: Publications of State Council, 1939, 795.

[210] "On the prohibition of Albanian students in foreign schools", Official Journal, no. 70, 23 September 1932, 1.

During 1920-1939, there was also a considerable decrease in charitable and philanthropic activities at the national level. While previously, especially during the first two decades of the 20th century, there had been an increase in donations dedicated to the entire country, during this period, charitable and philanthropic activities were primarily developed within regional borders. As emphasized above, those who had the means to raise funds for charitable activities believed it was the state's responsibility to address issues at the national level.

In fact, Albanians lacked a strong tradition in philanthropy. The Western tradition of charitable institutions supporting people in need and the active contributions of certain social segments for the general improvement of society did not have deep roots in Albanian territories. Even when this activity began to grow, it developed within the context of the National Movement. After the establishment of the Albanian state, there was a decrease in enthusiasm and intensity in charity and philanthropy.

The new challenges emerging after World War I were largely ignored by most of society. Private sector action concerning public issues was very weak. This was pointed out by the Ministry of Interior in a report addressed to the Prime Minister's office in 1936 on the issue of homelessness and begging. The ministry insisted that immediate actions should be undertaken by the state since charitable institutions were lacking and the sense of charity within Albanian society was weak.[211]

Even by the end of the 1930s, when philanthropic institutions like the Red Cross had been established, donations for this organization's activities were minimal, if not insignificant. In 1937, the Red Cross budget was 273,000 golden francs, of which only 3,800 were domestic donations and 1,200 were foreign donations.[212]

As can be observed, not only were the overall donations inconsiderable, but even the foreign donations were several times higher than the domestic ones. In 1938, there was a further decrease in donations, with 1,750 golden francs coming from domestic sources and 1,750 golden francs coming from foreign sources, for a total of 3,500 golden francs.[213]

The dominance of regional identities translated into low engagement with issues concerning the entire Albanian society. The state was seen as the entity responsible for resolving nationwide problems. Regional identity and the fragility of national unity facilitated the development of a centralized state during this period.

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[211] CSA, fund 149, year 1936, file V-217, journal 2.

[212] Official Journal, no. 37, 13 April 1938, 5.

[213] Official Journal, no. 65, 1 September 1938, 7.

While each area and region focused on resolving its own problems without concern for what was happening beyond its borders, it was the state that took care of the entire country. Consequently, while different regions continuously required the state's support, they did little to help each other.

At this moment, the state emerged as the nation's shield and representative, and as the forger of national identity. Statism developed as both a product of nationalism and a necessity for establishing the nation. Its patriarchal role was reinforced in this context, with the state's activities and exclusive initiatives to resolve problems increasing.

The state's activities towards societal development and progress are 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 is viewed as a duty, not a choice, as is the case with the private sector. However, given the lack of this ideal in Albania, the contributions of Albanian political figures who engaged in establishing special institutions for charitable and philanthropic activities hold particular value. Therefore, this study should highlight the role of the state, reflecting the aims and visions of certain individuals in leadership positions who became promoters of new developments and attempted, through their initiatives, to address the challenges of their time.

The state supports or hinders the development of charity and philanthropy through its instruments, especially by law. The state, directly or indirectly, is an important factor in this field. This is particularly true in the case of Albania during the years 1920-1990, considering the low levels of philanthropic activity, which caused frustration in higher state instances and often compelled the public sector to act alone in its initiatives to improve societal conditions.

However, the legal system was too limited in this regard, reflecting the lack of tradition and the state's inability to stimulate philanthropic activity. Unlike other developed European countries, where the state often obliged wealthy private sector entities to serve society through specific fees and obligations, this did not happen in Albania. This was difficult to implement because the economic and financial opportunities of Albanians were generally very low. State officials were aware of this. In a report the Ministry of Interior sent to the Council of Ministers in 1936 for passing a law to collect taxes and surtaxes to set up and maintain charitable institutions, it was emphasized that despite taxes in Albania being lower than in other countries, they were still high for Albanians. However, the Ministry of Interior aimed to oblige the wealthy to pay more taxes to provide the necessary income for such initiatives.

If the state could oblige anyone to contribute to philanthropic activities, it would be the public administration, as Ahmet Zogu did during the years 1922-1924 while he was Minister of Interior and Prime Minister, when he ordered the public administration to pay quotas to fill the coffer of the recently created Albanian Red Cross.

In Albania, there was not a favorable climate for donations and especially wills, which were the main means through which donations for social problems were made. The testament execution process had many gaps and was not 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. The law "On Duty on Inheritance and Gifts and Transfers Without Absolutely No Equivalent," passed on 26 March 1928, excluded from taxation personal estates and real estates donated to the state, while it did not stipulate any tax alleviation for charitable and philanthropic actions.

Donations made to the state had advantages compared to donations made to organizations or institutions that were not part 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. Even 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. While these communities were allowed to collect occasional donations from Albanian citizens, even this process required government consent. This climate created by the legislation in force made the state the main destination of donations for philanthropic purposes. Thus, the state became the leader and main organizer of this activity, often not directly but through institutions under its subordination, such as the Albanian Red Cross.

To understand this controlling attitude towards all social activities and the centralizing trends of the time, we need to consider the historical context. The Albanians were divided into four different religious groups, were poor and uneducated, and their state was surrounded by hostile neighbors who had not yet accepted its existence. Above all, the new Albanian state was still fragile on the international stage. The fear of misusing regional and religious differences and the stimulation of centrifugal trends within a society that was still primitively organized made the Albanian state and its leader, Ahmet Zogu, very cautious regarding various activities. Consequently, Ahmet Zogu closely monitored all aspects of society.

However, it is important to note that the Albanian state did not undermine the activities of philanthropic societies or the donations from individual philanthropists benefiting their communities or the nation. The increased involvement of the state in these activities was also due to the lack of continuity and organization among various philanthropic societies and individuals. Their efforts were often isolated, sporadic, and uncoordinated, lacking a strategic approach and mainly addressing immediate needs. These deficiencies were less pronounced in institutions under state patronage, as they received financial and institutional support from the state.

The Albanian state, through the initiatives of its highest officials, such as Ahmet Zogu, Et'hem Toto, and Mehdi Frashëri, launched projects aimed at addressing societal issues. Since 1922, under the initiative of Minister of Interior Ahmet Zogu, the Albanian Red Cross was founded and continued to be under his patronage even after he became King of Albania.[214]

The Albanian Red Cross became the core of all philanthropic institutions in the country, including housing for the elderly, orphanages, and other charitable endeavors.

Beginning in 1925, Ahmet Zogu implemented policies aimed at modernizing the country. This modernization led to the expansion of urban centers and an increase in phenomena such as begging, homelessness, and the number of orphans. In the face of these issues, the Albanian state often found itself acting alone. Except for a few instances, such as in Korça or the activities of the Catholic clergy, civic actors were minimally involved in projects aimed at addressing the social issues arising from urbanization and poverty. The increasing number of homeless people and beggars in the streets of Tirana worried the Ministry of Interior, as these individuals could easily turn to crime and disrupt public order. This concern necessitated the establishment of charitable institutions to mitigate the effects of these phenomena.

One initiative was to establish housing for the elderly and disabled. Et'hem Toto, Minister of Interior during the liberal government of Mehdi Frashëri, set up a commission to address this issue with the support of the Prime Minister and the King. Another initiative by the same minister was the creation of the "Fund of the Poor," a project designed to help disabled and homeless people living in Tirana who originally came from other regions. Not being registered in the civil registry office of the capital city, they did not receive any social assistance. This initiative aimed to support exactly this group in need.[215] In 1936, the Ministry of Interior drafted a decree-law that required municipalities from various regions to send a certain number of orphans to the orphanage in Tirana.

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[214] CSA, fund 203, year 1934, d. 104, journal 2.

[215] CSA, fund 152, year 1936, d. 918, journal 7.

This decree also mandated that municipalities allocate 2% of their income to the Albanian Red Cross to cover the expenses for these orphans, as the orphanage was under the administration of the Red Cross.[216] These initiatives emerged mostly in 1936, during the Liberal government headed by Mehdi Frashëri, who tried to introduce a new approach to handling social issues. These efforts were neither preceded nor followed by similar initiatives, highlighting the narrow vision of the majority of the political elite of the time, who descended from the conservative groups of beylers.



The failure of this government resulted in the "freezing" of most of these initiatives, further stalling progress in addressing pressing social problems.

Another important element of philanthropic activity in the period 1920-1939 is the increasing involvement of Albanians living in Albania and the decreased involvement of wealthy immigrants or societies established for this purpose in the diaspora.

The prevalence of regional involvement in this activity continued during this period. In certain regions, the intensity and spectrum of philanthropic activities were broader than in others. Korça stands out again in this regard. This was evident even in the aforementioned decree-law on orphans, where unlike other regions, Korça was excluded from the obligation to send orphans to Tirana, as this city had opened its own orphanage, which it supported independently. This orphanage was established thanks to the philanthropists from Korça, highlighting the level of humanism and civilization within this society.

Another notable element is the prominence of the Orthodox community in conducting charitable and philanthropic activities, particularly in southeastern Albania. This level of involvement was not observed in other areas where Orthodoxy prevailed. In southeastern Albania, the Orthodox population was more emancipated and had a more developed sense of social responsibility than in other parts of the country. It is worth noting that the involvement of the Islamic community in philanthropic activities increased significantly, especially in central Albania. The rise of Tirana as the capital made it more open to the world and empowered the middle class of traders and entrepreneurs. Similarly to the preceding period, this class remained the main social group promoting these activities.

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[216] "Decree-Law on the Orphans and Poor People to be Sent by Municipalities to the Red Cross Orphanage", Official Journal, no. 50, 29 July 1936, article 1 & 2, 1.

While the south of the country continued to be a primary source of charity and philanthropy, there was an observable increase in central Albania and a weaker involvement in northern Albania, where, with the exception of the Catholic clergy, civil actions in this field were lacking.

During this period, cities became the centers of charity. Various factors contributed to this, including the concentration of financial capital necessary for philanthropy in urban areas, the residence of the middle class in cities, and the social tensions present, especially under urbanization conditions. This was not the case in Korça, which was surrounded by a constellation of developed urban centers orbiting it.

A gender approach to this issue would also be interesting. Women began to become more active in these activities. Sometimes alone and sometimes with the support of their husbands or relatives, they became more visible in charitable and philanthropic work. These are signs of a gradual, though slow, movement toward 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.

Another element was the considerable decrease in the activity of charitable societies. While other societies with charitable goals were established during this time, they did not engage to the same degree as in the preceding period. The number of charitable societies did not increase significantly. 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 Albanian society, but not through philanthropic action. They aimed, through propaganda and various cultural and political activities, to encourage nationalism among Albanian youngsters, emancipate women, and accelerate detachment from the Ottoman heritage. They cooperated closely with the state, which is why the majority were not involved in charitable and philanthropic activities. The charitable societies of this period were not nation-wide but local.

Religious institutions also became very active, with the Catholic Church standing out. Other religious communities got involved in charity and philanthropy but were very poor and lacked the appropriate organization to carry out social actions comparable in 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 long-established institutions for carrying out such activities, as well as the full and universal support from the Vatican, which considered Albania an area of special interest for missionary work, remained at the forefront of 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 the main hub of social activity in Albania. Unlike the other major centers, Shkodra and Tirana, where the champions of these activities were the Catholic clergy and state institutions respectively, Korça's charitable and philanthropic activities were conducted exclusively by private individuals and civil associations. Although not with the same intensity as in the preceding period, immigrants remained active in the region of Korça, contributing to philanthropic work through personal initiatives or charitable associations. The charitable and philanthropic activities conducted by the residents of Korça were of the same size, if not greater, than those conducted by the diaspora from this region. Many notable individuals contributed significantly to these efforts. For example, Senator Vangelj Turtulli financially supported the marriages of poor girls from Korça and left 10,000 Albanian francs in his will to the state hospital of Korça.[217]

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 began the construction of a road that would connect Tomorrica with Dardha. These constructions were crucial in a country like Albania, which had very few roads and limited communication due to this. The roads and bridges he constructed facilitated the development of the Skrapari region by connecting it with the main economic and cultural center of southern Albania.

Other less known benefactors include Niko Gjini, who left part of his inheritance to various charities,[218] Vasil Kondi, who donated his house in Bradavica village to the Ministry of Education to convert it into a school,[219] and Petro Prodani and Sejfulla Maluka from Erseka, who donated 8 dynym of land to establish schools in the town.[220]

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 into the family of a successful merchant from Vithkuqi who had moved to Korça, Thoma engaged in trade from a young age alongside his father.

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[217] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 88.

[218] Ibid. 88.

[219] Ibid. 93.

[220] Ibid.

Possessing exceptional entrepreneurial skills, Thoma and his father extended their business activities to many cities in Albania and other territories in the Balkans, such as Manastir and Thessaloniki.[221] Although not formally educated, Thoma became actively involved in the Albanian National Movement during the tumultuous years of 1912-1920. Later, he also engaged in the political life of Korça, a sphere in which the entire Turtulli family was involved. [222] Thus, the entire Turtulli family, not just Thoma, became involved in philanthropic activities. Since 1921, Athina Turtulli, Thoma's wife, financially supported the orphanage of Korça. This marked the beginning of Thoma's extensive philanthropic endeavors.[223]



In 1924, after the municipality of Korça failed to secure funds from the government to build a new library for the city, Thoma Turtulli stepped in and provided all the necessary money to achieve this goal.[224]

For this generous gesture, Thoma Turtulli was honored by the President of the Republic of Albania, Ahmet Zogu, with the Order of Commander of Skanderbeg.[225] He continued his support by financing the reconstruction of the library after it was damaged by the earthquake in Korça in 1931.[226]

Thoma Turtulli's family made another outstanding contribution to the establishment of a new orphanage in the city. The old building, where the American Red Cross had opened Korça's orphanage in December 1919, no longer met the necessary criteria. In 1930, Erasti Turtulli, the widow of Grigor Turtulli, promised to cover the expenses for buying the land and constructing the new building.[227] Within a year, the new orphanage was completed, and orphans from all Albanian territories were relocated there.[228]

In 1932, Thoma Turtulli pledged to the Albanian state authorities that he would build a hospital in Korça. Construction of the hospital began in 1933 and was completed in 1934.[229] When the construction was completed, Thoma's wife, Athina Turtulli, purchased a coal furnace to heat the hospital's interior during the winter. [230]

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[221]Ibid. 73.

[222]Ibid. 74.

[223]Ibid.

[224]Ibid. 75.

[225]Ibid. 77.

[226]Ibid. 77-78.

[227]Ibid. 79.

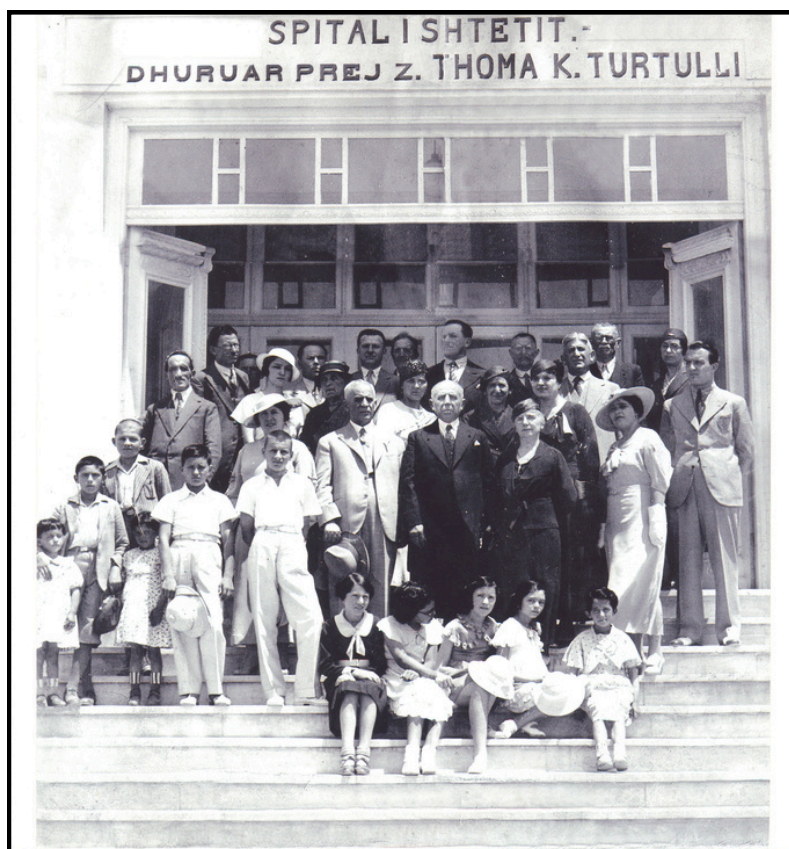
[228]Ibid. 80.

[229]Ibid. 80-81.

[230]Ibid. 82.

The philanthropic activity of Thoma Turtulli did not end there. He funded the completion of the Shën Gjergji Cathedral[231] 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 awarded the Order of Skanderbeg[232] by King Zogu.

All these significant initiatives, not only in the area of Korça but beyond, were made possible through the financial support of this great philanthropist. His philanthropic endeavors continued until his death in 1937.[233]



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[231]Ibid. 83.

[232]Ibid.

[233]Ibid. 84.

A series of philanthropic societies were established in the region of Korça during this period, particularly in the urban areas surrounding Korça. These societies included Qyteti in Mborje, Përparimi in Borova, Shpresa in Boboshtica, Shpresa in Dardha, Djalëria in Polena, Rilindja in Voskopoja, Çardhaku in Dishnica, Rilindja in Bradavica, and others. These societies were local in nature, founded out of the residents' need and desire to maintain their village's public infrastructure and uphold community solidarity. For instance, the charter of the Përparimi society in Borova, established in 1925, stated its goal as strengthening the village fund and community, constructing necessary village infrastructure, and assisting villagers in need.[234]

Such societies were also founded in the city of Korça on the initiative of the Prefect of Korça, Ismet Kryeziu, who had philanthropic goals in the field of education. Additionally, the Albanian branch of the Albanian federation Vatra was located in Korça. This branch was heavily engaged in charitable activities, with its contributions particularly notable at the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921. During this period, it provided significant assistance to the populations of the Tepelena and Elbasani regions, which were severely affected by a powerful earthquake that struck southern and central Albania at the end of 1920.[235]

Young girls and women from Korça were very active in founding a series of societies. In June 1921, the girls of Korça established the charitable society Civilizimi, which aimed at providing material assistance to poor students in the region of Korça.[236]

The female charitable association Përlindja was founded in Korça in 1920. However, due to internal conflicts, it split into two separate societies in 1922: Përlindja Shqiptare, headed by Evanthe Kota[237] and Rilindja, led by Helidiona Falli.[238] These societies were very active in philanthropic endeavors. For instance, in 1923, the Rilindja society donated 500 drachmas to the Military Hospital and provided aid to poor Muslim women on Eid al-Fitr.[239] Additionally, Rilindja organized lotteries to raise funds for its charitable activities.[240]

Among the women's charitable societies, the Gruaja Shqiptare society became particularly famous for its extensive charitable activities, aiding those in need. In Korça, several innovative fundraising activities went beyond traditional philanthropic methods.

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[234] Statute of the Progress of Borovë Village Charity Society, Korçë: A. A. Vangjeli, 1926, article 2, 4.

[235] CSA, fund 97, year 1920, d. 28, journal 1.

[236] CSA, fund 447, year 1921, d. 125, journal 1.

[237] CSA, fund 447, year 1924, d. 127, journal 1.

[238] CSA, fund 447, year 1924, d. 128, journal 2.

[239] Helidhona Falli, "To the Director of the Newspaper 'Albanian of America' Here", Albanian of America, no. 33, 2 June 1923, 7.

[240] Helidhona Falli, "Notice", Albanian of America, no. 42, 11 August 1923, 6.

These included ball parties where attendees donated money for charitable purposes, as well as concerts and plays, with proceeds directed towards philanthropy. In the 1920s, the region of Korça saw collective contributions from communities towards building schools in villages, emphasizing the importance of education for children without relying on the financially struggling Albanian state. A notable example is the village of Polena, where residents collectively raised 500 napoleons to construct a modern girls' school.[241]

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

Although on a much lower scale compared to Korça, Vlora also engaged in charitable and philanthropic activities during the period between the two world wars. These activities took place in the southeastern part of the country, driven by the initiatives of specific individuals and the actions of charitable societies. The most notable philanthropist from Vlora was Neshat Bej Vlora, who made significant donations to support education in particular. [242] In his testament, Neshat Bej Vlora allocated a portion of his fortune for charitable activities in Vlora and established a fund to enable young people from Vlora to attend university. A foundation was created for this purpose, but unfortunately, only a few students were able to benefit from this initiative. The majority of the funds were appropriated by the Islamic Community, limiting the intended impact of his philanthropic efforts.[243]

Another notable case is that of Xhiko Bako, a widow from the Xhyheri family, who donated plots of land for educational purposes, including female education. However, similar to the situation with Neshat Bej Vlora, these lands were appropriated by the Islamic Community, which did not allow them to be used as the donors had intended.[244] This appropriation hindered the philanthropic goals set by these benefactors for the advancement of education in Vlora.

Another woman from Vlora who carried out charitable work was Haxho Alikaj from Kuçi village. She financed the establishment of the school in her village and supported a series of other public benefit activities. Her contributions significantly impacted the local community, demonstrating the vital role of women in philanthropy during this period.[245] In 1923, the Mirëbërëse society was founded in Vlora, aimed at helping people in need. Unfortunately, little is known about its activities.

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[241] CSA, year 195, year 1926, d. 25, journal 212.

[242] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 183

[243] Ibid. 185.

[244] Ibid. 184–185.

[245] Ibid. 186–187.

In 1933, the charitable society Viro was established in Vuno village within the Vlora region. Its primary goal was to construct a village aqueduct using funds raised by residents and immigrants from Vuno.[246] Additionally, it is worth mentioning the significant contribution of 150,000 Italian liras donated by the Vakëfi of Vlora in 1924 for the construction of the high school in Uji i Ftohtë, Vlora.[247]

Even in Berati, charitable activity during the period under study left more traces than in the preceding period. In this historic city with a distinct identity, several charitable societies were founded, reflecting the sub-identities cultivated within the city's neighborhoods. During the 1920s and 1930s, each neighborhood in Berati had its own society focused mainly on neighborhood maintenance and helping the poor.

We have information on some of these societies. For example, a society called Vëllazëria Mirëbërëse, headed by Zau Gallani, had been established in Berati by at least 1922. The structure of this society indicates that all its members were Orthodox.[248]

Considering the urban organization of old Albanian cities, where neighborhood divisions often followed religious lines, it is likely that this was a charitable society from one of the neighborhoods of Berati. For instance, the Bashkimi charitable society of the Gorica neighborhood was established 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.[249] In June 1929, the charitable society Djersa of the Vakëf neighborhood was founded. Its goals included helping the poor girls of the neighborhood with their dowries, paving an important road in the city, and providing electric lighting in the neighborhood.[250] As you can see, these societies had a corporate nature. They were closed groups, an extension of the functions previously held by craftsmen. These charitable societies demonstrate how strongly the rufet mentality had survived in a city with deep historical roots embedded in its residents' souls. However, even in Berati, this atmosphere was beginning to change. Our sources suggest that there were efforts in the city to unite these small, numerous associations into a larger society that could effectively cover all of Berati with its activities. The outcomes of these efforts remain unknown.

In the Berati region at that time, collective charitable activities were also evident in rural areas. An example of this is the establishment of a school in 1926 in the village of Seman in Fier.

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[246] CSA, fund 447, year 1935, d. 225, journal 1.

[247] CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 30, journal 223.

[248] Kristo Guxhamana, "Meeting of the 'Benevolent Brotherhood' Society in Berat", *Albanian of America*, no. 20, 3 March 1923, 6.

[249] CSA, fund 447, year 1930, d. 282, journal 2-3.

[250] CSA, fund 447, year 1929, d. 75, journal 1-2.

The funding for this school came from money raised by the residents of the villages of Seman, Raman, and Sheq Marinas, aimed at providing education for the children of these communities. [251]

Even in Gjirokastra, one can find societies with charitable goals, although we currently have data on only one such organization: the Gjirokastra women's society, Përmirësimi. This society aimed not only at improving the social situation and emancipation of women in the region but also at protecting, educating, and training orphaned girls from Gjirokastra to lead a civilized life. [252]

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

In the period between the two world wars, numerous outstanding philanthropists emerged in Elbasani, a famous trading center strategically positioned in the center of Albania along the Shkumbini River. This city connected the south with the north of the country and the 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 Elbasani open to overall influences from both inside and outside the country. This special position of Elbasani was reflected in its charitable activities.

Among the most notable philanthropists during this period were Nazif Baholli, Rrapush Demeti, and Suljeman Domi.

Nazif Baholli, a well-known merchant from Elbasani, built the city's library. With this major contribution to his community, he joined the ranks of the city's esteemed philanthropists by creating a place where, beyond schools, knowledge is born and change begins.

Rrapush Demeti is another notable philanthropist from Elbasani. He donated most of his wealth to the development of education in the city and planned to use his fortune to support poor students from Elbasani. As a lover of knowledge, he had a large personal library, which he donated to the library of Elbasani.[253]

Last but not least, Suljeman Domi was another important philanthropist from Elbasani. Born in 1884 into a family of merchants, he became one of the richest individuals in Albania. His business ventures spread across the most important cities in Albania and extended to Greece and Italy.

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[251] CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, journal 31–33.

[252] CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 127, journal 3.

[253] Ibid. 166.

Suljeman Domi regularly engaged in charitable activities, aiding the needy and poor in Elbasani. He was a strong supporter of education, providing material assistance to the Lyceum of Korça and schools in Elbasani.[254]

Another noteworthy case is the contribution made by the people of Elbasani and the sub-prefecture of Peqini in 1922 towards the establishment of the Technical School of Tirana. Due to the high costs involved, the Albanian government appealed to all Albanians to assist in setting up this school, which was envisioned as a cradle of the nation's progress. The people of Elbasani responded promptly to this appeal. The municipality of Elbasani successfully raised 279 golden francs to support the school's establishment. [255] whereas the sub-prefecture of Peqini raised 1,200 golden francs. [256]

### **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 in 1923 left an amount of money to the poor living in the capital city,[257] in her will, and Sadik Numani, who in 1937, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of Independence, donated his house to the Albanian Red Cross for its needs.[258] Another charitable person was Hysen Nikolica, born in Kolonja but living in Tirana, who, together with his wife Zyrha, donated 20,000 golden francs in 1936 to build a kindergarten.[259]

The most outstanding philanthropist from Tirana during this period was Imam Hasan Vogli. Besides his significant contributions to political and educational life, he donated part of his wealth to the Albanian Red Cross before his death. This fortune consisted of 638 olive trees in a village in Tirana, which provided the Red Cross with a substantial income to cover important expenses for its philanthropic activities.[260]

Although not originally from Tirana and despite his controversial personality and activities, Ahmet Zogu is included in the list of philanthropists from the region of Tirana. This inclusion is due to his philanthropic activities during his time in Tirana, first as one of the most powerful people in the country and then as the head of the country for 14 years. Ahmet Zogu, primarily known for his political career full of vicissitudes and the extensive debates surrounding his role in building and modernizing the Albanian state and his internal and external policies, has rarely been viewed from a charitable perspective.

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[254]Ibid. 163–164.

[255] CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, journal 286.

[256]Ibid. journal 287.

[257] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 176.

[258]Ibid. 181.

[259]Ibid. 180.

[260] CSA, fund 150, year 1938, d. V–51, journal 4.

The truth is that Ahmet Zogu was known for his extravagant spending of the state budget and his penchant for luxury, despite being the king of a small and poor country. However, within the activities of this complex figure lies the role of a donor and a charitable person, whose ultimate intention was the modernization of Albania. This is why we decided to include him in the list of Albanian benefactors and philanthropists. Aim and action are closely connected and inseparable in evaluating these activities. Viewed from this angle, this represents a new aspect of his contributions. Ahmet Zogu was the greatest donor of the Albanian Red Cross. When this institution was under his patronage, he gave it the estate of Rreth, the zoo-technical station of Xhafzotaj in the region of Durrësi, the pine forest in Divjaka, Lushnja, and his assets in Saranda.[261] Except for the latter, these assets were given to him by the Constitutional Assembly when he became King.[262] These three donations constituted a significant portion of the Red Cross's income. Similarly, in 1931, he donated his private estates in Divjaka, Rremas, Karavasta, Përves, and Çakajas to the Albanian state.[263]

Despite questions about the real purpose or sincerity of these gifts, particularly given that the Albanian Red Cross was headed by Zogu's sister, Sanija, it is important to acknowledge that he set a clear personal example. This example served as a model in a society without strong philanthropic traditions. However, Zogu's philanthropic activity was not limited to these instances. In 1926, while still President, he donated cash to the council of elders of Kuç, Bolena, Fterra, Çorraj, and Kallara villages to help establish a school in Kuç.[264]



These gifts should be understood 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 little support. In June 1922, the appeal of the Albanian government to the people to help finance the construction of the Technical School of Tirana found more support in the city than anywhere else in the country. A total of 123 people from the city contributed a combined sum of 16,517 golden francs.[265]

The deputy mayor of Tirana, Zija Toptani, also joined this cause. Along with some of his colleagues, he donated their salaries to expedite the completion of the school.[266] Notably, Ismail Axhemi, a protocol and archive employee in the Ministry of Interior, contributed 2,016 golden francs.[267]

[261] CSA, fund 150, year 1938, d. V-51, journal 4.

[262] Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912-1939*, Tirana: Toena, 2009, 454.

[263] Ligje, Dekret-Ligje e Rregullore, vol. 8, Tirana: High Council, 1942, doc. 118, 409.

[264] CSA, fund 195, year 1926, d. 25, journal 149.

[265] CSA, fund 195, year 1922, d. 70, journal 300-301.

[266] Ibid. journal 285.

[267] Ibid. journal 294.

In the city of Kruja, which was part of the prefecture of Tirana, the opening of a boys' elementary school in 1921 faced numerous difficulties due to the economic constraints of the new and poor Albanian government. The inability to open the school mobilized important people in the city to raise funds to complement the amount of money needed for the school's construction. The Kadi and Mufti of the city raised 600 and 350 silver coronas, respectively. The Minister of Education at that time, Aleksandër Xhuvani, thanked them for their gesture.[268] Another significant example was the collection of 20 golden napoleons by the residents of the very poor village of Bastar in 1921, in order to open their school, which they desperately wanted.[269]

In the Tirana region, specifically in the mountainous areas of Fag village in the Zaranika region, Xhemal Ozuni, a local resident, generously donated his house to be used as a school, asking for nothing in return.[270]

In Tirana, besides the Red Cross, there were other charitable organizations. Among the most important was the women's society Shqiptarka,[271] which collaborated with the Red Cross and also worked independently on philanthropic initiatives, focusing on women's issues.

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[268] CSA, fund 195, year 1921, d. 7, journal 55.

[269] CSA, fund 195, year 1921, d. 13, journal 79.

[270] CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 1, journal 83.

[271] CSA, fund 155, year 1924, d. II-217, journal 1.

List'e Barikëvet për ndërtimin e  
shkolles së Jelles

300

Nr. rend.	Nëmbërt	Sasi e caktueme Fr.ar	Sasi e pagueme Fr.ar	Sasi e mbetur Fr.ar
1	Esat Topani	1.100	357.70	742.30
2	Mehmet Ali bej	440	214.30	225.70
3	- Riza bej	220	69.40	150.60
4	Enat bej	1.100	230.50	869.50
5	Abdi bej	1.100	530.00	569.40
6	Mehmet Pasha	6.000	3 300.-	2 700.-
7	Zija bej	220		220.-
8	Refik bej	220	132.-	88.-
9	Khalil bej	220		220.-
10	Qamil bej Sali bej	110	44.-	66.-
11	Halil bej " "	110	44.-	66.-
12	Mehmet bej Gori Ali	220	87.50	132.50
13	- Syber eff. Kullipi	110	62.-	48.-
14	Isken aga Petrola	330	64.00	265.10
15	Mustafa aga Elon	1.100	351.70	748.30
16	Sylejman aga Ruzi	220	44.-	176.-
17	Mehmet Begja	132	32.-	110.-
18	Haxhi Sait Beshiri	66.-	44.-	44.-
19	Myslim aga Beshiri	110	43.80	66.20
20	Bashir aga Beshiri	110		110.-
21	Hamdi aga Beshiri	110		110.-
22	Nymer eff. Kullipi	110	32.-	88.- 29.40
23	- Sefer Sarapi	66	32.30	33.70
24	Haxhi Hasan Vagavr	44	33.-	11.-
25	Myslim eff. Moxom	110	41.80	68.20
26	Muharrem aga Karpis	55	16.50	38.50
27	Shaban Hulla Abdulla	32		32.- 2.90
28	Sylejman aga Bashka	44	27.50	16.50
29	Hamdi aga Furtusi	22	11.20	13.80
30	Isken Alla	22	11.-	11.-
për t'u bart.		14.465	6.329.70	8.135.30

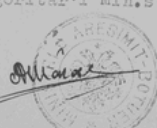
Contribution of the citizens of Tirana for the construction of the technical school, received from AGA fund 195, year 1922, d.70, pp. 300-304

31	- Mehmet bej Myshki	22		22 ✓
32	- Sefer Balla	22	5.50	16.50
33	- Selman off. Dauti	44	20.40	23.60
34	/ Islem Hyka	44	22.-	22.- ✓
35	- Islem Hasan Dornard	22	6.00	13.10
36	- Hysen Hagi	27.50	21.40	26.10 ✓
37	- Ibrahim Kagi	66	44.-	22.-
38	- Ramazan Doli	22	11.00	10.40 ✓
39	- Myrtosa off. Kexazi	22	5.20	10.60
40	- Haxhi Islem Rugu	110	43.00	66.40 ✓
41	- Abdullah off. H. Met	22	10.40	5.60 ✓
42	- Sali Pullani	44	30.40	5.60
43	- Osman Sorra	22	11.-	11.- ✓
44	- Hasan off. Dali	22	11.-	11.- ✓
45	- Mehmet Bardhosh	22		22.-
46	- Mehmet Hafiz Daja	11	5.40	5.00
47	- Abdullah off. Gjini	44	15.-	20.-
48	- Murat Haxhi Spahi	11	5.40	5.60 ✓
49	- Ryzon Spahi	11	5.40	5.60
50	- Muharrem Ruzhendi	11	5.40	5.60
51	- Ahmet Haxhi aga	11		11.- ✓
52	- Mica Hagi	22		22.-
53	- Mehmet Sul Osmanli	11	7.00	3.40
54	- Abdyl Gazina	22	11.-	11.- ✓
55	- Abdyl M. Ibrahim	22		22.-
56	- Ismail Gali	22	5.40	16.60 ✓
57	- Myrtosa Keta	10.50	5.50	11.-
58	- Hasan aga Byrxelli	11		11.- ✓
59	- Ibrahim Boran Tafai	22		22.- ✓
60	- Boran Struga	11		11.-
61	- Zogorija Seit Kruja	22	11.-	11.-
62	- Sali Huna	22	11.-	11.-
63	- Isman bej	66	44.-	22.-
64	- Islem Hulla Nallban	44		44.- 21
65	- Islem aga Lleshi	22	8.20	13.60 ✓
66	- Xmer Goshja	44	20.50	23.50
		15.477	6.749.90	8.727.10

Contribution of the citizens of Tirana for the construction of the technical school, Received from the AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, pp. 300-304

	u bartë	15.477	6.749.90	8.727.10
67	Evzlik Elendi	44	22.-	22.-
68	Hasan of. Dëshon	22		22.-
69	Ramazan of. Myfti	22	7.40	14.60 ✓
70	Hasa of. Myderrizi	44	40.30	33.80 ✓
71	Beqir of. Kavaja	22	8.20	13.80 ✓
72	Solim of. Resna	11		11.- ✓
73	Hamdi of. Mehmet	22	11.-	11.- ✓
74	Solim of. Ruta	11	7.-	4.- ✓
75	Hasan of. Bakalli	22		22.- ✓
76	Mehmet Haxhi Ibrahim	22	11.-	11.- ✓
77	Hajdar bej Myzëk	22	19.10	2.90 ✓
78	Hyson Mehmet Krojci	22		22.- ✓
79	Jusuf of. Xhaloku	55	22.-	33.-
80	Xhemal Petrela	44	11.-	33.- ✓
81	Beqir Kazani	10.50	10.80	5.60 ✓
82	Ramazan Kilezi	22	10.40	5.60 ✓
83	Mehmet of. Farka	11		11.-
84	Sul Katroski	22	10.40	5.60
85	Mehmet Balluk	4.10		4.10
86	Reshit Petrela	10.30		16.50
87	Sefer Rradhesi	4.10		4.10
88	Ali Hal Rexa	5.50	1.40	4.10
89	Shaban Sul Hara	4.10		4.10 ✓
90	Shim Shuku	5.50	1.40	4.10 ✓
91	Reshit bej Mulletja	8.20		8.20
92	Asim of. Ibrahim	11		11.-
93	Mehmet aga Bylyku	4.10		4.10 ✓
94	Usta Hasan Kurder	12.30	9.10	3.20 ✓
95	Doktor Panteqi	22		22.-
96	Khafer Lufta bej	11		11.-
97	Doktor Qazup of.	27.50	11.-	16.50
98	Ryshdi of.	44	20.50	23.50
99	Hyson of. Kavaja	44		44.-
për t'u bartë		16.157.40	6.965.90	9.191.50

Contribution of the citizens of Tirana for the construction of the technical school,  
Received from the AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, pp. 300-304

		16.157.40	6.965.90	9.191.50	203
100	Kasen Ali Mehmet	22	8.20	13.60 ✓	
101	Salih ef. Osman	11		11.-	
102	Nysen Nim Hoxhi	16.50	8.20	8.30 ✓	
103	Mustafa bej Haxhi bej	22		22.- ✓	
104	Osman ef. Kanas	11		11.-	
105	Tregtar Muzhoni	44	11.-	33.-	
106	Ismajl ef. Bekalli	11	2.30	8.10 ✓	
107	Osman bej Berberi	5.50		5.50 ✓	
108	Sali Haxhi Abdyl	22		22.-	
109	Dhimitër Hoxhaxhi	33	20.40	12.60 ✓ <del>12.60</del>	
110	Kristi Nina	27.50	12.30	15.30 ✓	
111	Nikoll Nishku	22	8.20	13.80 ✓	
112	Anastas Panteqi	22	5.50	16.50 ✓	
113	Kostantin Kanaschi	11	5.40	5.60	
114	Llak Lim Rroçi	11		11.-	
115	Anastas Lasku	11	5.40	5.60	
116	Senti Vasil Nishku	11	7.-	4.-	
117	Zush Andi Proci	11	3.80	7.10 ✓	
118	Spiro Zhava	5.50	3.-	2.50 ✓	
119	Dhimitër Çali	5.50	4.-	1.50	
120	Vangjel Sallabandi	8.20	4.10	4.10 ✓	
121	Rexhep ef. Dodja	11		11.-	
122	Osman ef. Haxhi Xher	5.50		5.50	
123	Shuma	16.517.60	7.075.30	9.442.30	
124	prej cimit shume me 10.64. Sima dh. 10.923/2. D. 15.VII.22. - 33. shume e metes (nandmi katërqind e katërdhjet e dy e tridhetë)				3.409.30
Vërtetohet njësija me origjinalin qmëse qd ka Zyber ef. Hallulli.					
Tiranë me 18/VI/1922.					
Llogoritar'i Min.s'Arsimit					
					

Contribution of the citizens of Tirana for the construction of the technical school, Received from the AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, pp. 300-304

Lista qe përmba emrat e donatorëve,  
kane dhënë ndihmë për shkollën teknike

Nr. i donatorit	Emri e mbiemri		Vlerësimi	Se paguam pr. ar.
1	L. Canil	Bala	Inspektori	20
2	"	Salih Beku	Drej. - Normal	20
3	"	Vasil Durraku	profesor "	10
4	"	Kostaq Bipo	" "	10
5	"	Kico Konomi	" "	10
6	"	Aliush Gjashi	Drej. Gjetës	
7	"	Shiniteri Paparito	" Dëshmor	10
8	"	Rexhep Gëza	mësues	7
9	"	Abdull Canushi	"	7
10	"	Mustafa Gjergjani	"	5
11	"	Ibrahim Shillgjergji	"	5
12	"	Shiniteri Durraku	"	5
13	"	Spiro Tetia	" fije	7
14	"	Gjezulla Guraku	" "	5
15	"	quter Leksi	"	5
16	"	Kaqi Canija	Drej.	10
17	"	Gjergjevi Vasi	mësues	10
18	"	Atina Bicu	"	5
19	"	Evantli Danica	"	5
20	"	Mari Geraslija	"	5
21	"	Shefik Vasaani	"	5
22	"	Asani Kristomari	"	3
23	"	Alapri Fesli	Drej.	10
24	"	Ibrahim Derranija	mësues	8
				187

Other contributions from citizens of Tirana for the development of education, received from the  
AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, folio 283

		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 Saraçi.	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.	-
		282.	70.	-
11.	" Shaban Bul. Mora.	4.	10.	-
12.	" Ymer Qosja.	23.	50.	-
13.	" Dimitri Hobdari.	12.	60.	-
14.	" Riza Bej.	150.	60.	-
15.	" Abdyl Tufina.	11.	00.	-
16.	" Haxhi Hasan Vaqarri.	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. Regna.	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 Juna.	11.	00.	-

Other contributions from citizens of Tirana for the development of education, received from the AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, folio 283

35.	Hysejn Haqi.	6.	10.
36.	Islam Aga Petrola.	265.	10.
37.	Zeqirija Said Kruja.	11.	00.
38.	Spiro Khava.	2.	50.
39.	Qamil Bej Sali Bej.	66.	00.
40.	Sul Katrosht.	5.	60.
		1112.	70.
41.	Marad 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 Manika.	2.	90.
49.	Hasan Aga Berxolli.	11.	00.
50.	Osman Sorra.	11.	60.
		1198.	80.
51.	Beqir Kazazi.	5.	60.
52.	Ramazan Kellezi.	5.	60.
53.	Selim Eff. Muta.	4.	00.
54.	Ali Mol Peza.	4.	10.
55.	Ibrahim Koqi.	22.	00.
56.	Sefer Rradheqeqi.	4.	10.
57.	Hysejn Him Maqi.	8.	30.
58.	Ismail Eff. Bakall.	8.	10.
59.	Islam Aga Lleshi.	13.	80.
60.	Bejram Struga.	11.	00.
		1285.	40.
61.	Mahmud Eff. Farka.	11.	00.
62.	Nikoll Nishku.	13.	80.
63.	Mustafa Bej Haxhi Bej.	22.	00.
64.	Handi Eff. Mehmedi	11.	00.
65.	Sulejman Aga Basha.	16.	50.
66.	Mas-har Bej Qorr Ali.	132.	50.
67.	Mahmud Begeja.	110.	00.
68.	Myslim Eff. Llagomi.	68.	20.
69.	Doktor Panteqi.	22.	00.
70.	Anastas Panteqi.	16.	50.
71.	Abdyl Mulla Ibrahim.	22.	00.
72.	Islam Mulla Nallibani.	11.	00.
		1741.	60.

Other contributions from citizens of Tirana for the development of education, received from the AGA, fund 195, year 1922, d.70, folio 285

## 2.2.5 Charity and philanthropy in the region of Shkodra

Shkodra is a significant hub of charitable and philanthropic activity. While the Catholic clergy predominantly led these efforts, numerous individuals also engaged in personal charitable initiatives independent of clerical institutions. One notable figure is Tef Pogu, widely regarded as the foremost benefactor from Shkodra. A highly successful Albanian entrepreneur, Pogu established a network of factories across the country. His contributions to the community were extensive, including financial support for educational institutions such as the elementary school of the Stigmatine Sisters and the Filip Shiroka school. Additionally, he supported religious establishments, including Shën Kolli's Church and Paruca's Mosque. Pogu's philanthropy extended to aiding many impoverished residents of Shkodra. Notably, during the Holocaust, he sheltered two Jewish individuals in his villa in Razëm.[272]

The unique character of the city of Shkodra was further exemplified by the establishment of Shoqëria Ndihmëtare, founded by local workers. This society functioned similarly to a corporation and extended the guild-like organization, but it was based on class rather than profession. Essentially, this was the Albanian version of trade unions. The primary aim of Shoqëria Ndihmëtare was to assist workers in times of need, with its main objective being to foster unity and cooperation among them. Additionally, the society had educational aspirations, focusing on the development of its members and their children, continuing the strong and enduring guild tradition.[273]

The activities of the Catholic clergy extended beyond the city of Shkodra and areas predominantly inhabited by Catholics to other regions, particularly in the southern part of the country where Orthodox communities resided. This outreach was part of a broader strategy of social action initiated by the Catholic Church to attract non-Catholics into its fold. In Albania, this strategy was implemented through orphanages, schools, and various charitable initiatives. The Catholic clergy specifically aimed to engage the Orthodox communities in the regions of Korça[274] and, notably, Berati. The Catholic Church was highly active in these efforts, leveraging structures established by the end of the 19th century to expand its influence and promote a culture of charity. Through its philanthropic work, the Church not only extended its reach but also set a high standard for charitable activities, surpassing other clerical institutions operating in Albania at the time.

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[272] Iljaz Gogaj, cited document, 170–171.

[273] CSA, fund 447, year 1920, d. 352, journal 1.

[274] CSA, fund 133, year 1924, d. 922, journal 8.

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

In addition to the contributions from Korça immigrants in the United States, other charitable aid came from the broader Albanian diaspora. This support underscores the significant role of Albanian immigrants in the philanthropic activities of the Albanian Red Cross. For instance, in 1925, Albanians from Kavalla donated funds to the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to benefit the Streha Vorfnore (Orphanage) in Tirana.[275] Similarly, the Albanian community in Skeca, near Thessaloniki, provided financial assistance directly to the Albanian Red Cross. [276]

Albanians in the United States also contributed funds to the Red Cross. In 1924, the Albanian consulate in New York documented this support by sending a check for \$340 to the institution. They assured that efforts to raise additional funds to further support the Red Cross's philanthropic work would continue.[277] Although modest and sporadic, this aid holds significant symbolic value. It demonstrates that immigrants were contributing on two different levels: first, the societies founded by immigrants from specific regions were supporting their local areas of origin; second, the philanthropic societies established by the Albanian state were providing funding and support on a national level.

## ***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 organized in philanthropic activities, largely carried out by Albanian societies established since 1920. With few exceptions, such as the Vatra Federation's 1920,[278] donation of 1,000 francs for educational development in Albania, most activities were focused on contributions to specific communities.

The societies were organized based on regional affiliations, focusing on the development of their respective communities of origin. Immigrants from Dardha were particularly active in their charitable and philanthropic endeavors, setting a commendable example for other Albanian societies in America.

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[275] CSA, fund 151, year 1925, d. 256, journal 1.

[276] CSA, fund 151, year 1924, d. 486, journal 19.

[277] CSA, fund 151, year 1924, d. 486, journal 19.

[278] CSA, fund 195, year 1920, d. 21, journal 20.

In 1920, the Mbleta Society made significant contributions to the development and improvement of public infrastructure in the village of Dardha. By 1922, in collaboration with Dardha immigrants in Bucharest, they established a new school in the village. In subsequent years, this society continued to donate funds for infrastructural improvements and to establish road connections between Dardha and other village centers for trading purposes.[279]

The Përparimi Youth Society from Cambridge, Massachusetts, also made significant contributions. In addition to assisting the Mbleta Society in completing the construction of the village school, which began in 1922, Përparimi raised funds to build a village library in 1993. Concurrently, Dardha immigrants in America helped establish a theater group in their village, which performed pieces from the national repertoire.[280] Another very active society during the 1920s was the Arsimi Society in Boston. Its goals included supporting the development of education, assisting the orphanage in Korça, establishing Themistokli Gërmenji's monument, and providing aid to the victims of the 1930 earthquake in southern Albania.[281]

During this time, several other local societies in America were involved in charitable work. One such society was the Përparimi Society in Chicago, established in 1929 by immigrants from the village of Sinice. This society funded the construction of a modern school in their village.[282] Another society with the same name, Përparimi, established by immigrants from the village of Qyteza, founded a school in their village. This initiative ensured that all villages within the Dardha commune had access to their own schools. [283] Similarly to the Dardha immigrants, the Qyteza immigrants funded public investments, including the construction of a water supply system, which significantly improved the quality of life in the village. They also established the Shën Thanas (Saint Thanas) Church.[284] Additionally, immigrants from the village of Vithkuq founded the Mirëbërëse Fillestare Society, which established a school in Vithkuq. [285] Immigrants from the village of Vinçan undertook a similar initiative by establishing a society bearing the village's name, with the primary goal of founding a school in their village.[286] Immigrants from Hoçari village also contributed to the establishment of a school in their village.[287]

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[279] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 64.

[280] Ibid, 67.

[281] Ibid, 68–69.

[282] Ibid, 69.

[283] Ibid, 70.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Ibid, 71.

[286] Ibid, 70.

[287] Ibid, 71.

The Bashkimi Society, founded by immigrants from Boboshtica village in America, conducted extensive philanthropic activities in their village. These efforts included improving public infrastructure through the construction of a bridge, road repairs, and assistance to the poor. Additionally, immigrants from Gostivisht village in Leskovik established the Shënjt e Premtja Society in Philadelphia to support their village.[288] The Çamëria Society in America, founded in 1924, raised funds to support the Çam population, who were experiencing significant hardships due to the policies of the Greek state. [289] To support this effort, they launched a campaign under the slogan "For the Drama of Çamëria." [290] This society made valuable contributions to the Çam cause by assisting the Albanian population in Greece and raising awareness among the American public. While most charity and philanthropic work in the United States was conducted by organized Albanian societies, individual contributions were also significant. Notably, Gaqi and Kleanthi Qiriazzi donated funds for a scholarship to the Women's School in Tirana, directed by Parashqevi Qiriazzi.[291]

The Albanian diaspora in Romania was also active in philanthropic activities. In 1924, the Albanian community in Konstanca contributed 4,000 lei to enhance the book collection of the National Library.[292] In 1925, the Bucharest community sent funds to the Liceum in Korça and the Pedagogical High School in Elbasan.[293]

In addition to organized societies, individuals played significant roles in these efforts. For instance, Llazar Qiriazati from Skorovot village in Kolonjë bequeathed 100,000 lei in his will for the establishment of a school in his birthplace. He specified that the interest earned from a deposit he made in a Romanian bank be used for establishing schools and assisting the youth, elderly, and poor women in Skorovot.[294]

Another notable contributor was Vasil Çikozi from Vithkuq, who, in January 1927, allocated money from the sale of shares for the school in Vithkuq and education in Korça.[295] Data shows that before the Great Depression of 1929, Kristaq Naum Dogani was one of the wealthiest Albanians in the world. However, he did not extensively use his wealth for philanthropic purposes. Nevertheless, before his death in 1934, he had deposited funds in Vienna for the benefit of the school in Korça.[296]

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[288] Ibid, 71.

[289] Abdul Abazi, "Fushata e çamëve", Dielli, no. 2683, 1 March 1924, 8.

[290] Idriz Demi & Hysni Sejko, "Mbledhja e shoqërisë 'Çamëria'", Dielli, no. 2675, 9 February 1924, 2–3.

[291] "Vepër mirëbërëse", Shqipëri e re, no. 193, 7 September 1924, 1.

[292] CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 240, journal 1.

[293] CSA, fund 195, year 1925, d. 16, journal 1.

[294] CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 30, journal 1.

[295] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 61–62.

[296] Ibid, 62.

Although less common, Albanian immigrants in Bulgaria were also involved in charitable and philanthropic activities. One notable figure was Kristo Adham Grapshi from Korça. Upon his death in Sofia in 1924, he mandated that his successors donate 35,000 leva annually for 25 consecutive years to support education and charitable causes in Albania. Additionally, he required an annual donation of 35,000 leva for the education of a Bulgarian, Turkish, and Jewish youth.[297] The Albanian diaspora in Turkey also engaged in charitable activities, albeit to a more moderate extent. In November 1924, the Albanian charitable society "Pragu Shqiptar" sent funds to the Pedagogical High School in Elbasan, which was experiencing significant financial difficulties.[298] In 1925, the Albanian community in Istanbul, through the Albanian Consulate in Athens, provided financial aid to the Liceum of Korça and the Pedagogical High School in Elbasan.[299] In addition to these societies, individual immigrants also made notable contributions. For instance, Jani Mitrushli from Kovaçisht village in Leskovik funded the establishment of an elementary school in his birthplace in 1930.[300]

The Albanian diaspora in Egypt was also very active. They made significant contributions by supporting the population in Tepelena following the major earthquake of 1920.[301] Among the Albanian immigrants who helped were notable figures such as Andon Çako,[302] Pando Avramushi,[303] Avramidh Opraï[304] and others. This community responded similarly to the famine crisis that struck northern Albania in 1928. ani Vruho, Nexhip and Dilaver Dibra, Andon Çako, Hajdar Rustemi, and others heeded the call of the Albanian government to support these areas.[305] Another noteworthy activity by this community was raising funds to assist the sick in Albania and the poor in Egypt.[306] In doing so, they supported their country of birth while also contributing to the country that offered them the opportunity to acquire wealth and where they spent a significant part of their lives. Among other examples, Stelio and Jani Kostandini, immigrants in Alexandria, Egypt, rented out their property in Albania to raise funds for the orphanage in Korça.[307] Additionally, Vasil Thomaidhi, an immigrant from Grapsh village, sent 2,000 gold francs in 1936 for the establishment of a school in his birthplace.[308]

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[297] Ibid.

[298] CSA, fund 195, year 1924, d. 275, journal 2.

[299] CSA, fund 195, year 1925, d. 16, journal 1.

[300] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 62.

[301] CSA, fund 97, year 1924, d. 32.

[302] Ibid, journal 2.

[303] Ibid, journal 2.

[304] Ibid, journal 4.

[305] CSA, fund 97, year 1928, d. 33, journal 1.

[306] CSA, fund 97, no year known, d. 35.

[307] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 72.

[308] Ibid.

## 2.3 Charity and philanthropy during 1939-1944

The years of World War II in Albania, like in the rest of Europe, were marked by destruction and severe social, political, and economic problems. The presence of foreign armies on Albanian territory, the anti-fascist movement, and the clashes between different political factions exacerbated the situation. This five-year period is a brief timeframe for describing philanthropic activity, especially given the country was under foreign occupation. In such circumstances, organized social or individual initiatives were either politicized or quite reserved due to the uncertainty of the time. This was particularly true in regions where fighting occurred between invading armies and resistance groups. Helping these areas was often seen as aligning with the anti-fascist resistance.

Philanthropic activity in Albania was generally organized by the middle class, which usually resided in cities controlled by foreign armies. While it is true that business profits can increase during wartime, facilitating charitable activities, assets—the main source of charity and philanthropy—are also at risk. Given the nature of the war in Albania, neutrality was difficult. Siding with one party often made individuals targets for reprisals from the opposing side, reducing the scope of charitable and philanthropic activity at a time when the country needed it most. However, this does not mean that charity and philanthropy disappeared entirely. Extreme circumstances often lead to extreme measures.

The Italian invasion of Albania brought significant changes to the country's political structure. Fascist institutions, modeled after Mussolini's totalitarian system, were established in Albania, affecting traditional charitable and philanthropic institutions. The Red Cross, for instance, was put under the control of fascist institutions, with Maja Jakomoni, the wife of the Italian King's representative in Albania, Francesco Jakomoni, appointed as its head. The goal was clear: to turn the institution into an instrument that would serve the image of fascist Italy and ideologize its activities to support fascist propaganda in the country.

Additionally, the Italians launched an intensive process of indoctrinating the Albanian population, particularly the youth, by establishing many fascist societies.[309]


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[309] Pirro Gjerasi, cited work, 37.

Listë *Shënim d'Kom* (5)

për ndihmë për atdhetarët që psova  
nga terrmeti i Tepelenës

---



in. el Kom	Argimidhi Opuni dhe Miltiudhi Torzi	q.s.	500
"	q. Th. Papacostantini	" "	100
"	Vlezëria Andreco	" "	200
"	Spino Gine	" "	100
"	P. Antonuz,	" "	200
"	Maria Cica	" "	100
"	Eleni Vatikioty	" "	100
		<b>g. d.</b>	<b>1300</b>

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of those affected by the earthquake in Tepelena, 1920. Taken from AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.30, p.5



# Listë.

Mansoura

Ëdima për Shqipëtarët të Tepelenës  
që psuan nga tërmeti.

x Hedrie bey Farid	Liq. 5.	x
x Nikolla Kargneci	" 5.	x
x Docteur Kamikhaç	" " 5.	x
x British Consul Agent	- - 2	x
x Hassan Bey Mourad	- - -	500 Mills. x
x Doktor Grilina	" " 5	-
x Avocat Angelopoulos	- - -	200 m/m.
x Avocat Gouristis	" " 1.	-
x Avocat Papadakis	" " 1.	-
x H. N. Aramiaschi	" " 1	-
x Jusuf Begir Picari	1	500
x Panayotis Lavaris	1	500
x Theocharis Anagnostis	1	500
x tel-hu-hassani goscova	2	500
x elia N. ti-hassani tel-hajt	1	500
x Gerni-shagiri	1	500
x idr tel-gjajarat 7 llogj	1	600 six
x Doctor M. Amin Nour	1	x
x Ibrahim Bey El-takri	2	x
x H. K. Kostasina Nacho	2	x
x M. Mavryanni	1	: 500
x Michel Papadakis	1.	x
x Avocat David Botton	1.	x
x A. Papayanopoulos	1.	x
x Mahmud Bey Musci	1	x

ureporter P. Z. 4170

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of those affected by the earthquake in Tepelena, 1920. Taken from AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.30, p.10

# Report

P. 4170

* Anest S. Liatsico	L. 1.	
* A. Araliti bey	" 1.	
* Palmiro Landi	" 1.	
* Anest Vlachos	" 1.	
* P. Bodani	" 2.	<del>XXXXX</del>
Alex. Naccache	" 1.	
Ch. Couladis	" 4	
Abdel Latif bey Helmi Ghannam	" 2	
* Famille Hussaini Abd. Razek.	-	500 <sup>mg</sup>
* Spiro Alexi	" 3.	
* Spiro C. Bonelli	-	500 <sup>mg</sup>

Total

Piastres au tarif. cinq mille huit cent  
soixante dix (P. 5870)

\* A. Yalloussi L. 1.  
\* Anonyme

100  
P. 5870  
50  
P. 6020

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of those affected by the earthquake in Tepelena, 1920. Taken from AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.30, p.10.a

108 53.4		Ndibma	
		për të punuar në për Kalamaytë të mbetur të varfër.	
Wasta	2 <sup>te</sup>	Vasil Zogori	900
,	,	Dori D. Zogori	300
,	,	Thia D. Zogori	200
,	,	Mitko V. Gode	200
,	,	Pando Tance	100
,	,	Vilazarija Xexo	200
,	,	Petro Gole	40
,	,	Arbimidi Adamidi	100
,	,	Koco Gicko	200
,	,	Toran Kalapeci	100
Bibeb	,	Spiro Tocika	100
,	,	Anonim (Diamandi Bravo)	195
,	,	A. P. (A. Potiragi Greq)	50
,	,	Anonim (Musliman ngaj Mborja)	5
,	,	Petro Parbeni	100
,	,	Anonim (Nikola Ioanov)	40
,	,	Tirpi Klisura	10
Facen	,	Dimitri Gole	150
,	,	Anonim (Kristo Nikola)	100
,	,	Toran Mitko	195
,	,	Abilea Antoniazi	150
Matai	,	Kostandin Zencaridi (Termetas)	197 50
Minieb	,	Loni Zogori	487 50
,	,	Naum Antoniazi	97 50
,	,	Milo Duci	97 50
		Për të Këyer	4315

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of the poor and the sick, obtained from AGA, fund 97, year 97, d.35, p.1

Béni-Souéf	Ε Κόγερ	Gr	4315	-
"	2 <sup>o</sup> Leuka Baklava	"	195	-
"	2 <sup>o</sup> Kosta E. Mitko	"	292	50
"	" Dimiska K. Mitko	"	97	50
"	" Jean Koiopulo (Greek)	"	97	50
"	" Apostolos Koiopulo	"	97	50
"	" Atb. Hadjalis	"	97	50
"	" E. D. Evangelou	"	50	-
"	" Apostolo Kanellis	"	50	-
"	" G. Kanellis	"	30	-
"	" A. Ligenis	"	20	-
"	" Theodore Pantazis	"	20	-
"	" Mr Frances	"	5	-
"	"	"	5	-
"	" Leonidas Lappas (Greek)	"	5	-
"	" Sebastian Takovas (Greek)	"	50	-
"	" Dr G. Piaske	"	97	50
"	" Mino Permetari	"	30	-
"	" Jani Ioanidi (Permetas)	"	97	50
"	" K. E Konomu (Vlah)	"	30	-
"	" Vasil Dimitriu (Korcar)	"	97	50
"	" Mr Greek	"	20	-
"	"	"	20	-
"	"	"	20	-
"	"	"	20	-
	Per Mr Koger		5860	-

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of the poor and the sick, obtained from the AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.35, p.1a

E Kayer		Gr.	5860	-
Bëni. Louef	je Greq		15	-
			20	-
Waska	Lazo Guda (Pommetas)		30	-
	Dimi Mici (Oparak)		50	-
Bëni. Louef	N. D. Economi (Vlah)		97	50
Waska	Stefan A. Kena (Pommetas)		97	50
	Anonim (Anton Gako)		40	-
	Lionis Meria (Korçar)		150	-
Achmawt	Trakti Vitto (Pommetas) Lap		100	-
Waska	Atbanas Gumpas (Greq)		195	-
	Anonim (Vlah)		80	-
	Panayoti Kaniklidis (Greq)		40	-
	Thia Nona (Korçar)		50	-
Mansourab	Thia Koka		97	50
			6922	50
Prj. Tit	Vasil Xogori për të mësuarin e Klubit		60	-
	anëtar për 6: muaj për 30: qers.		60	-
	Landri V. Xogori, ndëri 6: . . . 30: .		60	-
	Milto V. Godes anëtar për 7: muaj për 31: dimor.		70	-
Limi e parqitjes			7172	50
Lecore 13. Me anin e Porsës Gr. 6337.50				
	për të bërë hallat në Porsë		10.	-
	14 të prisur në tit Xogori e Gode		215.	-
	Prj. Tit. Milto për 7: A. Antonadi		150.	-
			6712	50
M. G. Anu			460	-

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of the poor and the sick, obtained from the AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.35, p.2

	Per to Kayer		Gr. 6922.50
Abu-el-Wakf	Dori Georgiu		121.85
Matai	Dori Dragidi		121.75
Fayoum	Lambi Keri	gr 40	
E. Shavay	S. Nitse	97.50	
" "	A. Nitse	50	
Hiri	Mustafa be Ginde penti	92.50	
" "	Jasur Osmani	40	
Zubhar	Sadek-choh. Mumin	40	
"	Mumin S. Mumin	97.50	
"	J.P. Vuko	<u>97.50</u>	560 -
A. Tashko. Fayoum			195.
Nikoll Yeko Desuracas		gr 10	

Evidence of the contribution of the Albanian diaspora in Egypt in support of the poor and the sick, obtained from the AGA, fund 97, year 1924, d.35, p.2.a

The Italians took full control of not only the various institutions in the country but also extended their influence over numerous aspects of life. This was reflected in the social, political, and cultural life of Albania. The prevailing discouraging climate initially paralyzed many activities, including philanthropic efforts. Examples of donations during this time were very limited. One notable instance was the donations made in June 1940 by a group of Albanians in Skopje to the Albanian Red Cross, which served as a testament to their fascist convictions.[310] Even though this fact alone cannot lead to a definitive conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that Italy was perceived by many Albanians living abroad as the only power capable of uniting all Albanian territories into a single state. Their expressions of fascist convictions should be understood within the context of Albanian nationalism, and these donations should be considered in light of this ideology. Such acts were signs of gratitude towards Italy for its support against the irredentist policies followed by the Yugoslav Albanians.

During the Italian occupation of Albania, potentially inspired by Catholic charitable institutions, the Albanian Muslim Charity Committee was established in Shkodra under the leadership of Esat Myftia. Its purpose was to support Muslim religious institutions in the city. This committee founded a library with books in Albanian, Arabic, and Turkish and established a madrasa school, which also offered sewing courses for girls from poor families.[311]

Starting in 1943, charitable activities intensified. The severe crisis in Italy and the growing resistance movement created opportunities for more decisive actions. The Mirëbërësit e Kurveleshit Society[312] was established that year in an area heavily affected by the war and one of the main centers of anti-fascist resistance.

Among notable contributors were Fatushe Zaimi from Elbasan, who in 1942 donated two pieces of property to the Pedagogical High School of Elbasan, [313] and Ismail Nebi Sefa from Lushnja, who requested the Ministry of Education to establish a school in Lushnja.[314] However, these were sporadic instances. In general, charitable work during this period focused on addressing the war's impact on civilians.

Charitable activities increased even more in 1944, following the arrival of the German army in Albania. Due to the Germans' more tolerant and non-intrusive approach toward the social policies of the Albanian government and its institutions, charitable and philanthropic efforts experienced a revival.

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[310] CSA, fund 161, year 1940, d. 698, journal 1.

[311] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 171–172.

[312] Kastriot Dervishi, *History of the Albanian State 1912–2005*, Tirana: 55, 515.

[313] Iljaz Gogaj, cited work, 164–165.

[314] *Ibid*, 150.

The Albanian Red Cross was the main pillar of this activity, and, unlike before, businesses were also extensively involved in its initiatives. This extensive involvement was partly because southern Albania had become a battleground between the German army and their collaborators on one side, and the partisan forces on the other. The consequences of this fighting on the civilian Albanian population were severe. The Red Cross responded by reaching out to well-known Albanian businesses, many of which responded generously with financial and material aid. For instance, a well-known trader from Tirana, who wished to remain anonymous, donated 80 meters of wool fabric,[315] Hasan Lahi and Villa Company donated 2,000 gold francs, along with a commitment to donate 1,200 gold francs annually.[316] Additionally, Birra Korça contributed 2,000 gold francs,[317] Skanderbeg distillery donated 1,000 gold francs[318] and Sita society donated 5,000 gold francs.[319] Other well-off individuals, such as Dylifqar Toptani responded to this call by donating to the Red Cross 400 kg of wheat,[320] another donor gave away 6,300 kg of pears and 45 kg of watermelons,[321] Tonin Selfo and Spiro Truja donated 4,315 gold francs,[322] and another philanthropist whose name is unknown donated 5,000 gold francs.[323] An example of this solidarity was demonstrated following the American allies' bombing of Tirana on October 17, 1944. The damages were significant, and in support of the affected and injured people, 56,000 Albanian francs were collected.[324] In 1944, when the consequences of the war were felt more acutely than at any other time since the occupation of Albania in April 1939, the Mirëbërësi Society was established in Berati, a city very close to major armed clashes. The aim of this society was to provide assistance to all people affected by the war in the Berati region, including those who were not originally from Berati but had relocated there due to the fighting.[325]

Although these donations might appear limited and sporadic, considering the time at which they were made and the prevailing insecurity in the country, they provided significant relief. This helps us conclude that despite the disorder and extraordinary conditions Albania was experiencing, charitable activities did not fully cease. Both men and women, common citizens and large commercial businesses, were involved, demonstrating the comprehensive social mobilization that occurs in times of war.

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[315] CSA, fund 203, year 1944, d. 1365, journal 4.

[316] Ibid.

[317] Ibid, journal 11.

[318] Ibid, journal 16.

[319] Ibid, journal 25.

[320] Ibid, journal 17.

[321] Ibid, journal 19.

[322] Ibid, journal 20.

[323] Ibid, journal 18.

[324] Kastriot Dervishi, cited work, 497–498.

[325] CSA, fund 447, Pa vit, d. 281, journal 3.

Above all, these are isolated examples that reflect the spirit that had captured Albanian society during the war, which manifested itself in three notable cases. First, during the Greek-Italian war in 1940, Albanians helped, sheltered, and fed Greek soldiers, despite the crimes the Greek army had committed in southern Albania 26 years prior. This attitude was more clearly displayed in 1943, after the capitulation of fascist Italy on September 8. Many Italian soldiers, who had been the invaders up until that moment, were sheltered by Albanians, thereby escaping certain massacre by the German army. The third example is the protection of the Jewish population during the Holocaust. When the dark cloud of the Holocaust covered Europe, Jews were sheltered and protected by Albanians, despite the severe consequences their families could face. Albania was one of the few countries where no Jews were handed over to the Nazi German authorities.

These cases of extreme humanism can be unequivocally incorporated into the context of philanthropic activity, as they exemplify efforts to establish friendly relationships among nations by overcoming prejudices and historical tragedies in the name of a better future. This is especially true when considering the historical circumstances in which 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 had extreme consequences on the country's history. A new political, economic, and social system was established, aiming to homogenize society and transform it into a monolithic entity. This goal was pursued through a class struggle, which translated into establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a one-party system, the abolition of private property, and the centralization of the economic sector. The economy was managed through central planning and the extreme ideologization of society to create the so-called "new man".

As a result, a highly centralized political, economic, and social system was established, controlling and directing every sector of life, including art and culture, which were turned into strong propaganda tools to serve the regime. This model represented a Bolshevik and Stalinist type of totalitarianism, which was implemented in an exemplary manner in Albania. In a country where private property is nonexistent and the political system is based on the principle that the state belongs to people who have no property and who strive to eradicate property and extinguish the owner class, little room remains for philanthropy. The Albanian statism, initially established by Ahmet Zogu, was taken to extremes by communist leader Enver Hoxha. Under Zogu, the role of the state in society increased, but during the 45 years of the Stalinist Albanian regime, it became absolute. The state assumed responsibility for everything.

During this period, the public sphere expanded endlessly, while the private sphere shrank almost to extinction. Any association with the private sphere was subject to criticism and punishment. Following the principle that general interests should supersede personal interests, the regime sanctioned the eradication of personal initiatives and the skills of individuals to act as independent subjects and actors. Stalinist totalitarianism banned any efforts by individuals to strike a balance between personal and social interests, which is essential for a moral and healthy economic state. Such regimes did not intend to achieve this balance. By acting unilaterally, eradicating individualism, and exalting collectivism, they destroyed both the economic foundation and the values necessary for philanthropic activity.

To better understand how charity and philanthropy were interpreted in socialist Albania, one can consult the Albanian language dictionary published in 1980 by the Academy of Sciences of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. What is striking is that the authors of this significant work do not differentiate between the two terms. A charitable person is defined as "one who is supposedly involved in charity activity, supposedly helping the poor, but in reality intends to quell their anger and extinguish the class war (*referring to some organizations and societies in capitalist countries*)."<sup>[326]</sup> Philanthropy is similarly defined in a dismissive manner (*referring to some organizations and societies in capitalist countries*).<sup>[326]</sup> while Philanthropy is defined as "the material aid given in bourgeois countries by the rich to the poor just for appearances; the bourgeois charitable individual humiliates and demeans the dignity of the person."<sup>[327]</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. Under such circumstances, it could not be expected that a state adopting a prevailing Marxist-Leninist ideology would include provisions in its legislation to regulate charitable and philanthropic activities. In the Civil Code of that time,<sup>[328]</sup> charity and philanthropy are not even mentioned.

Donation was not seen as an act that an individual would carry out for the benefit of society, and the same was true for inheritance. In reality, the resources available to the Albanian state at that time were so limited that nothing was left for charity. Private property, as defined in the Constitution and the Civil Code, was closely linked to household belongings and savings from state salaries, which were not substantial enough to be used for such purposes.

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[326] Dictionary of the Modern Albanian Language, Tirana: Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, 1980, 1145.

[327] Ibid, 470.

[328] Codes of the Popular Socialist Republic of Albania, Tirana: Polit Bureau of the Council of Ministers, 1982, 115–233.

However, this does not mean that support for one another and efforts for the development of society disappeared in socialist Albania. Instead, these concepts were thoroughly transformed and presented in a format aligned with the ideology and interests of the communist regime. In Albania, charity and philanthropy were replaced with the concepts of voluntarism and solidarity. According to the Albanian dictionary published in 1980, solidarity is defined as "the relation between people or social groups that have common goals and help each other, the expression of support for the goals and actions of someone with whom we share the same opinions," while voluntarism is defined as "the principle of people's participation in a movement, an organization, etc., at their own will, without being obliged by anyone." [329]

However, the definitions of these two terms were far from reflecting reality. In socialist countries, voluntary work was often used to build socialism. In actuality, this was mandatory labor, particularly for the youth, benefiting major infrastructural projects undertaken by the communist state, such as new roads, railways, and terraces on the hills in the south of the country. This was an efficient and cost-effective way of implementing large projects. The ideological "dressing" of this voluntarism was conducted simply, presenting it as a societal contribution to collective property and reducing the distinction between intellectual and physical labor—a characteristic of bourgeois society according to Marxist ideology.

Solidarity was expressed through mutual support, especially in times of catastrophe, when people did not rely solely on the state but united with it under the motto "monolithic union party-people." Solidarity and voluntarism merged in these instances, as voluntarism was a result of socialist solidarity. Notable cases include the assistance provided to northern Albania after the devastating 1979 earthquake, where thousands of volunteers from across the country traveled to Shkodra and Lezha to aid recovery efforts. Similar instances occurred in 1967, 1975, and 1976. These efforts were state-organized and served as propaganda, yet the inherent tendency of Albanians to help each other should not be denied.

While charitable and philanthropic activities were eradicated in Enver Hoxha's Stalinist Albania, a female Albanian abroad became renowned worldwide for her philanthropic work, inspiring people globally. Gonxhe Bojaxhi, widely known as Mother Teresa, is the greatest Albanian philanthropist and one of the greatest in human history. She dedicated her life not to her homeland or co-religionists but to all humanity, addressing the world's suffering, particularly in poor and underdeveloped countries.

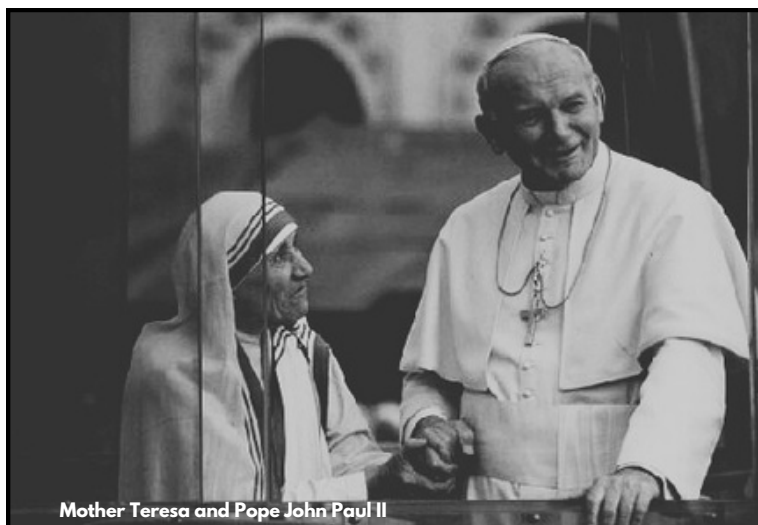
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[329] Ibid, 219.

Unlike other philanthropists, Mother Teresa was not a successful businesswoman using her wealth to pursue a personal vision. She was never involved in any business ventures. Her example promoted philanthropic activity, mobilizing and inspiring people worldwide. Mother Teresa belongs not just to Albania or Albanians but to the whole world. Her initiatives and undertakings maintained the continuity of philanthropic activity among Albanians, which spans the last seven centuries of their history. Without her influence, this thread might have been severed by the Stalinist policies of the Albanian communist regime. Without her influence, this thread might have been severed by the Stalinist policies of the Albanian communist regime.



As a result, it is worth emphasizing that while support among people in times of need did not disappear, the phenomenon of philanthropy as a form of personal initiative to serve society did. Even in cases of solidarity and voluntarism, actions were taken within the context of collective communities rather than individual decisions. The attack on individualism and property, and the curtailing of freedom by state structures, thoroughly eradicated charitable and philanthropic activity for 45 years. Philanthropy, which was not a highly distinguished phenomenon among Albanians to begin with, disappeared further under the communist regime's pressure.



The social impact of hegemonizing policies, the elimination of private property, the extreme poverty resulting from collectivization, and extreme statism stripped the "new man" of social responsibility. This became evident during the post-communist period. Although the Stalinist regime fostered national bonding among Albanians, it also severed some critical bonds of civic conscience that kept society united. Charitable and philanthropic activities over the last 20 years have been widely defined by the 45 years of communism in Albania. The visible rise of anti-nationalism among Albanians has revived local and religious identities, shaping philanthropic activity in the years following the fall of communism. The revival of this phenomenon in post-communist Albania and its characteristics are addressed in the following chapter.

### **3. CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY AFTER 1990S**

After the 1990s, similar to other Eastern European countries, Albania underwent significant political and economic transformations toward a democratic society and an open market, reintroducing private property and free competition. Important reforms included market liberalization, privatization of state enterprises in strategic sectors, and the development of the private sector.

The challenges of transition, social, and economic development were immense, especially in the context of a new political system, a poor economy, weakened institutions, a society with a 45-year history of isolation, and rising unemployment. The development of free enterprise created conditions for many private initiatives that significantly impacted economic growth and societal development in the country. The establishment of non-profit organizations and the development of civil society were other development factors contributing to economic and social progress of the country.

These developments laid the groundwork for the revival of charitable and philanthropic activities.

This study does not delve deeply into the analysis of charity and philanthropy development post-1990s, as this was not its primary focus. The limited philanthropic activity during these 20 years, and the lack of documentation by both individuals and the state necessitate a different study approach. Recognizing the importance of analyzing philanthropic activity during this period, Partners Albania has undertaken and will continue to conduct more thorough studies in this field. As part of its research efforts to promote the development of philanthropy in Albania, Partners Albania conducted a study in 2000, focusing on businesses and their participation in philanthropic activities.[330]

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

As part of a study involving 140 businesses nationwide, Partners Albania identified a significant level of philanthropic activity across various sectors, including finance, construction, transportation and telecommunications, extractive and processing industries, hotels and tourism, among others. Partners Albania believes that a proper identification and presentation of philanthropic activities by businesses will enhance recognition of these efforts and underscore the contributions of the business sector to local community development. It will also raise awareness among society, institutions, and other stakeholders about the importance of philanthropy.

Below, we present some of the cases that were identified and investigated further, along with their beneficiaries. These cases illustrate the diverse philanthropic activities undertaken by businesses of different sizes and industries and highlight the various types of contributions to economic and social development.

These examples, add value to the study by contributing to the historical analysis of philanthropic activities and their evolution over time. This study demonstrates that the philanthropic activities observed in the 19th century are a continuation of earlier social initiatives, albeit within different political and social contexts.

### **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 specializing in waste recycling. Since its inception in 2009, GPRA has demonstrated a strong commitment to philanthropic activities.

The company has consistently supported a local 9-year schools by promoting environmental awareness and recycling practices. Each year, students are invited to visit the GPRA factory to observe the recycling process and learn about recyclable materials. This initiative encourages positive environmental attitudes and behaviors among the students. Additionally, GPRA invests in maintaining school facilities for those schools that actively collect and send recyclable materials to the factory.

Furthermore, GPRA has significantly contributed to the local community by providing employment opportunities for the residents of Gjocaj. The factory, situated in the village, employs many local residents, fostering cooperation and interaction within the community.

The employment of local residents, particularly women, has been beneficial for the socio-economic development of the area. As reported by employees, the company organizes New Year's Eve celebrations for children living in the villages and the Roma community, providing gifts to the children, while the community comes together to celebrate.

**Helvetika Profarma**, based in Tirana, specializes in manufacturing pharmaceutical products, primarily for children. The company's commitment to philanthropic activities, particularly in child health, began in 2004.

Over the years, Helvetika Profarma has engaged in various sustainable philanthropic efforts. It has supported numerous organizations, including Fëmijët Shqiptarë Foundation, Unë Gruaja Foundation, and Shpresë për Botën Foundation, in their work with the marginalized communities. Additionally, the company has provided support during natural disasters, such as the flood in Shkodra in 2010, where were donated products to Shkodra Regional Hospital.

Helvetika Profarma's support has included organic products for children and financial contributions ranging from €5,000 to €6,000. The company's primary motivation for its philanthropic activities is the aim to assist people and groups in need. The company believes that state tax relief, increased incentives, and media promotion could further stimulate philanthropic activity among other enterprises in Albania, broadening the scope of support for various individuals and groups.

**Pegi Printing House**, a venture in the processing industry sector, has been involved in philanthropic activities for several years. The company's support has varied, with some efforts being sporadic and others more consistent.

Notable examples include their contributions during natural disasters, such as the floods in Shkodra, where the company provided both books and financial support. Additionally, the company has consistently supported the Zyber Hallulli Orphanage by donating fiction books for children and has assisted the Association for the Blind with customized Braille books.

The motivation for these philanthropic activities stems from the company's vision and commitment to help those in need. The company is confident in its ongoing support for these associations and institutions in the future.

**Mr. Aslan Sula**, president of Santara Ltd. company is a distinguished businessman in the construction sector who has been actively involved in philanthropic activities since 1993. Throughout this period, he has supported numerous art and cultural initiatives and helped individuals in need.

Mr. Sula's contributions to the community are extensive and diverse. He has sponsored concerts for the Kruja Folk Group and supported the Kruja Athletic Club. His philanthropic efforts also include building houses for the homeless and constructing the Myftinia of Kruja. Recognizing the importance of infrastructure, he has paved roads in communities where they were most needed. Additionally, he has provided significant help to paraplegic and tetraplegic individuals, offering both financial and other forms of assistance.

Mr. Sula's deep sense of trust and sensitivity to community issues and needs are the major driving forces behind his philanthropic endeavors. His unwavering commitment to aiding these communities has been and continues to be, constant and varied, showcasing his dedication to making a positive impact.

**Sheraton Tirana Hotel** has been engaged in philanthropic activities since it began operations in Albania, primarily supporting organizations that aim to improve the quality of life for various social groups. Notably, the hotel has provided substantial support to the Albanian Red Cross and UNICEF.

For the Albanian Red Cross, Sheraton Tirana Hotel has contributed material resources and food for children and the elderly. In collaboration with UNICEF, the hotel has supported the "Albania Reads" initiative for two years, with a total contribution of 100,000 Euros.

The driving force behind these contributions is the hotel's commitment to helping those in need and fostering societal development. A significant aspect of their philanthropic strategy is collaborating with other social actors. The hotel organizes auctions and banquets within its premises, inviting personalities from various fields. Additionally, a donation box is placed in the hotel hall, allowing guests and visitors to contribute symbolic amounts.

To further enhance its philanthropic efforts, Sheraton Tirana Hotel recommends that organizations working on community development remain transparent while cooperating with the businesses. The hotel also emphasizes the importance of raising the society awareness on the value and impact of philanthropy.

**Fix Pro**, a company involved in the processing of meat products in the city of Korça, has been engaged in philanthropic activities since 2005. Each year, Fix Pro supports Dorcac, a humanitarian organization dedicated to marginalized groups in Korça.

The company has also provided financial support to five children, attendees of the church kindergarten, children of the killed police officers, and an elderly woman living in Boboshtica village, given her difficult economic situation and lack of relatives. Generally, Fix Pro's support is in the form of financial contributions. The motivation behind their philanthropic activities is not to promote business, but rather a sense of humanity, respect for people, and a desire to be helpful to society.

With six years of experience in such activities, Fix Pro is highly appreciated by the community. In the future, the company aims to involve other businesses in these philanthropic efforts.

**Çelësi Media Group**, based in Tirana, is another company actively engaged in philanthropic activities. The Group has established the Kult Academy, organizing an annual competitions and awards for artists across various fields, with a strong focus on promoting art and culture. Over the past seven years, the Group has contributed approximately 2-3 million Lek, supporting various causes, even in a challenging environment.

The drive to engage in philanthropic activities stems from the personal commitment of the company's leadership and aligns with the mission of the Group. Looking ahead, the company aims not only to continue the work it has been doing over the past seven years but also to inspire other business actors and organizations to get involved. The Group recognizes that much more can be done to support art and culture in Albania.

**Shaga Ltd.** a company based in Tirana and active in the processing industry, has been engaged in philanthropic activities since 2009. Over this three-year period, the company has provided support primarily through material donations, though financial contributions have also been made. Among the organizations and institutions supported are the Association of Police Officers Killed in the Line of Duty and the Zyber Hallulli Orphanage.

The executives at Shaga Ltd. are motivated by the belief that it is the moral duty of society to assist those in need. This conviction drives their commitment to philanthropic activities. Looking ahead, the company plans to continue supporting vulnerable groups. However, they suggest that improvements to the existing legal framework, which would offer more incentives and facilities for businesses, could encourage a broader range of philanthropic efforts

**Vodafone**, part of its corporate social responsibility efforts, established the Vodafone Foundation in 2007. This initiative represents a significant innovation within the Albanian business community, providing substantial social and sustainable investment for the community. The Foundation allocates an annual contribution fund of at least half a million Euros. It announces three rounds of applications for project funding each year. To date, 73 organizations and 21 winners of the "Bota e Ndryshimit" (World of Change) program have been supported. The Foundation's projects are implemented across Albania, reaching both urban and rural areas. The funding has been directed towards various groups in need, including children with thalassemia, orphans, homeless individuals, terminally ill patients, former victims of human trafficking, elderly people living alone, pregnant mothers at risk of abandoning their babies, prisoners, the Roma community, and people in remote areas of the country. The Foundation also supports environmental initiatives. A key focus in the Foundation's strategy and programs is aiding people with disabilities. This includes a wide range of projects such as the manufacturing of wheelchairs, employment programs for disabled individuals, the establishment of specialized laboratories, programs tailored for blind people, special educational initiatives for specific groups, and the organization of the Special Olympics Games in recent years, among many other initiatives.

**Raiffeisen Bank**, in line with its sponsorship policy, focuses primarily on education, social support for children and students, and the enhancement of environmental conditions in various cities and regions across the country. The Bank has invested over half a million Euro in social projects, demonstrating its commitment to improving community life. Through collaborative projects with several municipalities, Raiffeisen Bank has contributed to the reconstruction and equipping of school libraries with books, as well as the refurbishment of schoolyards in cities such as Tirana, Elbasan, Berat, Shkodra, Korça, Durrës, and others. Raiffeisen Bank has also supported initiatives like the Student Conference for five consecutive years, the National Basketball Championship involving 1,500 children nationwide, and the provision of computers to the Finance and Accounting Department at the Faculty of Economics of Luigj Gurakuqi University in Shkodra. Additionally, the bank has contributed to the renovation of the concert hall at the Preng Jakova Art School in Shkodra and supported the "One Citizen-One Tree" initiative by the Tirana municipality for two years. Other environmental projects supported by the bank include tree planting in Berat, Kruja, and Lushnja, as well as cleaning coastal areas across the country. A distinctive aspect of Raiffeisen Bank's activities is the extensive involvement of its staff in various initiatives, such as cleaning the coastlines of Vlora, Durrës, Divjaka, and Shëngjin. Raiffeisen Bank Albania has also made significant contributions in response to natural disasters. Notably, the bank donated 100,000 Euros to assist northern areas affected by floods, with additional donations coming from the company's 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:

- Olive groves of 638 trees located in Kryesi-Përcellesh of Tirana, donated by the belated Hasan Vogli;
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 the 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 annully by the Zhapio 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 windows 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 throughs the royal order no. 374, dated 5.8.1935 addressed to the Prime Minister's Office.

# RESOURCE MATERIALS

## a. Original documents

### a.1. Archive Resources

Central State Archive (CSA):

Fund: Albanian Society in Egypt/Shoqëri Shqiptare në Egjypt, 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 Nacionalçlirimtar, no. 489.

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