

# GLIMPSES OF BALKANS

CULTURAL HISTORY

Edited by  
Abidin Temizer

*The term culture has a broad meaning with multiple descriptions. In its common definition culture contains traditions, art, and language, as well as the legends, literature, habits and knowledge of a society. Because of its wide coverage culture is a good indication of how a society views the world, events and people outside of its cultural zone. Cultural habits are distinguishing features of a nation, group or society. They are inherited from one generation to another and they shape the behaviors and life styles of their host group and they distinguish the host society from others.*

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**Broadcaste Coordinator • Yaşar HIZ**  
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**Edited By • Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER**  
**Cover Design • Esra YILDIZ**  
**Interior Design • Gürkan GÖÇER**

**Cover Image:** “Muslumans and Rayahs”, Travels in the  
Slavonic provinces of Turkey-in-Europe, London 1877,  
p. 179.

**First Edition • © April 2017 /Ankara, Turkey**  
**ISBN • 978-605-180-695-2**

**Publisher :** Gece Kitaplığı  
**Adress:** Korkut Reis Mh. Yeşilırmak Cd. 10 / B  
Demirtepe  
Çankaya/ANKARA  
**Tel:** 0312 384 80 40

**web:** [www.gecekitapligi.com](http://www.gecekitapligi.com)  
**e-mail:** [gecekitapligi@gmail.com](mailto:gecekitapligi@gmail.com)



**Printing & Binding**  
**Bizim Büro Matbaa**  
Sanayi 1. Cadde Sedef Sk. No: 6/1  
İskitler - Ankara

**Certificate Number: 26649**  
**Tel: 0312 229 99 28**

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## **PREFACE**

Because the Balkans is a geographical transit zone, it has hosted several civilizations throughout history. Thus, the societies living in Balkans have a cosmopolitan culture which has been inherited from these civilizations. The primary factor in the formation of this culture is the geographical conditions of the area. The geographical determinants of the area constituted a base for the development of a rather harsh culture. However, the civilizations settled in the Balkans played an important role in the transformation and enhancement of this culture. For this reason, the second factor which shaped the culture of the Balkans is the civilizations it accommodated. Doubtless, Ottoman State is the most influential of all of various civilizations since Ottoman State held the sovereignty in the area for 450 years. Along with Ottomans, Rome, Venice, Austria and Russia have contributed substantially to the shaping up of this culture.

The articles taking place in this book, in which you will find traces from Balkans culture, reflect the samples of the Balkans cultural history in Ottoman period. There are ten articles in the book. These articles focus on the subjects of the cultural characteristics of the Balkans societies; mainly on those of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey from different perspectives. The influence of nationalism, the facts of migration and war, geographical conditions and political power on the culture has also been discussed in the book.



I would like to thank Borsilav Grgin, Mihai D. Drecin, Said Olgun, Tuğrul Özcan, Valentin Ciorbea, Gabriel Octavian Nicolae, Mim Sertaç Tümtaş, Emin Atasoy, Abdullah Soykan, Recep Efe, Mariana Budu and Feyza Kurnaz Şahin for their valuable contribution in the embodiment of this book.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER

# CONTRIBUTIONS ALBANIAN DIASPORA IN ROMANIA TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALBANIAN NATIONALISM IN THE LAST QUARTER OF NINETEENTH CENTURY

Said Olgun\*

## Introduction

Albanian nationalism initially developed among the members of diaspora in Italy, Greece, Romania and the Ottoman Empire, as well as in Southern Albania. Especially after the abrogation of the League of Prizren, the Albanians living abroad became linked with the conduct of the Albanian national movement, and the societies they established carried out educational and cultural activities.<sup>1</sup> Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Egypt, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Western Europe, and America have been the places where Albanian diaspora, old or new, large or small, were present.<sup>2</sup> Albanians living outside Albanian territories played a crucial role in the development of Albanian nationalism through the various educational and cultural activities they initiated. With only limited opportunities to print many publications within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, Albanian nationalists relied on Albanians living abroad to get these materials printed, arranging for them to be smuggled into and distributed within the country through various foreign consulates.<sup>3</sup> Since these potentially harmful publications were addressed to these consuls, and delivered to the country via the mail, particularly by means of the Austrian and

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Bartl, *Milli Bağımsızlık Hareketleri Esnasında Arnavutluk Müslümanları (1878-1912)*, (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1998), 247.

<sup>2</sup> Nathalie Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri Avrupa'da Çoğunluğu Müslüman Bir Ulusun Doğuşu*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay., 2013), 98-99.

<sup>3</sup> BOA (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives) Y.PRK.ASK (Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Askeri Maruzat), 68/43, 15 Ca 1308.

Italian postal services, it is self-evident that foreign postal services were a crucial tool in smuggling such publications into the Ottoman territories.<sup>4</sup> However, the nationalist Albanians, who were considered as “*erbâb-ı mefsetet*” (protagonists of disorder) by Ottoman governments, did not only utilize foreign postal services and consulates in their endeavor to smuggle these Albanian publications printed in European countries into the Ottoman territories; these publications were also handed out to passengers traveling to Albanian territories, especially to Shkodra and Ioannina, through Greece and Epirus. Consequently, the Ottoman governments occasionally tried to prevent these harmful documents from entering Albania by interrogating the passengers who came ashore.<sup>5</sup>

#### **a. Activities of Albanian Nationalists Living in Romania**

Of all the Balkan countries, it was in Romania that separatist and nationalist Albanians were made most welcome, and as a result it was there that the largest Albanian diaspora could be found. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Albanians in Romania lived in Bucharest. At a time when Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria yearned to extend their lands by invading Macedonia, Romania did not want to fall behind in this endeavor, and it too became engaged as a serious and powerful contender. In pursuit of their aspiration to annex the Macedonian provinces of Transylvania and Bukovina, the Romanians did not shy away from spending 800,000 Franks annually on their activities in the region.<sup>6</sup> To this end, Romanian governments also did not hesitate in taking advantage of the Albanians; attempting to increase their dominance over the people by providing support for their educational and cultural activities.

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<sup>4</sup> BOA, DH.MKT. (Dâhiliye Mektubi Kalemi), 2598/55, 1 Z 1319.

<sup>5</sup> BOA, DH.MKT., 814/16, 16 Za 1321.

<sup>6</sup> BOA, BEO (Babiali Evrak Odası), 68/5045, 19 S 1310.

Albanians have always given credit to Romania for its support in the development of Albanian nationalism. In this context, Şemseddin Sami described the favors made by Romania for Albanians, as follows:

Apart from anyone else, it was Romania who most befriended Albania. They wished the Albanians to break with Greeks. The first Albanian company was established in Romania. The first Albanian printing press was opened there too, and it was here the first books were printed. Albanians will never forget the kindness of Romania.<sup>7</sup>

During the early 1880s, when for political and economic reasons it was rather difficult to print books in Istanbul, three Orthodox Albanians, Visar Dodani, Thimi Marko and Gjorgji Gjeço, who wished to steer the financial potential of Albanian merchants towards printing and publishing activities, began to raise donations under the title The Branch of Istanbul Society for Albanian Books.<sup>8</sup> Efforts to establish the Drita (the Light) Society started in late 1884; the Society commenced its activities in January 1885<sup>9</sup> with two wealthy merchants, Anastas Avramidhi Lakçe from Korçë and Konstandin Efdim from Drenovë, becoming the chairs of the society. As a result of the support of the Romanian government, 15,000 Franks was swiftly raised for printing materials and the society's other expenses.<sup>10</sup> As a result of its activities, almost one hundred volumes were transferred to Albania until March 1887, and a school was established in Ioannina.<sup>11</sup>

Following this, a printing press was purchased in Vienna, so that textbooks, by the Naim and Sami Fraşeri

<sup>7</sup> Şemseddin Sami Fraşeri, *Arnavutluk, Ne İdi, Nedir, Ne Olacak? (Vatan-ı Mukaddesimiz Olan Arnavutluk'u İhâta Eden Tehlike ve Muhâtıralardan Tahlisine Dair Efkar ve Mutâlaât)*, translated by Şahin Kolonya, 80.

<sup>8</sup> Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, 231.

<sup>9</sup> Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 146.

<sup>10</sup> Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, 231.

<sup>11</sup> BOA, DH.MKT., 1404/88, 20 C 1304.

brothers and Jani Vreto, could be printed using the ‘Stamboul alphabet’. In 1886, eight textbooks written by the Fraşeri brothers and Jani Vreto, including books on the alphabet, grammar, and general history, poetry, accounting, and ethics. These textbooks were regularly delivered to Korçë and taught in both girls’ and boys’ schools. When the name of the society was changed to Drituria (Knowledge) Society in 1887, four new textbooks on the alphabet, geography, science, and folk poetry were printed. Two books on religion, translated from Greek to Albanian by Protestants, and a textbook on accounting were printed in 1889. Another poetry book by Naim Fraşeri was published the following year, and two new textbooks were printed in 1894 and 1895.<sup>12</sup> A natural history textbook written by Naim Fraşeri, titled *Diture per mesonjtoret e para*, a history book, titled *İstori e pergjithesme*, and a reader for children, with the title, *E Kendimet çunavet Kendonjetorse*, were printed between 1886 and 1888.<sup>13</sup>

The Albanian alphabet books published before the Second Constitutional Monarchy were mainly printed in Bucharest and delivered to Albanian territories via foreign postal services.<sup>14</sup> The Drita Society of Bucharest printed Şemseddin Sami’s book titled, *The Albanian Alphabet* (*Abetare e gjuhës shqip*), with the signature S.H.F. (Şemseddin Halit Fraşeri). This book had two editions, the first published in 1888, and the second in 1900. Additionally, two further books, written by Şemseddin Sami, *The Grammar of Albanian Language* (*Shkronjëtorë e gjuhës*) and *Geography* (*Deshkronjë*), were published by the Dituria Society in 1900 and 1902 respectively.<sup>15</sup> Nikolla Naçio, who

<sup>12</sup> Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, 231-232.

<sup>13</sup> Bartl, *Milli Bağımsızlık Hareketleri*, 225.

<sup>14</sup> BOA, DH.MKT., 2307/81, 18 L 1317. BOA, Y.MTV. (Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı), 164/206, 11 Ra 1315.

<sup>15</sup> Bülent, Bilmez, “Ölümünün Yüzüncü Yılında Şemseddin Sami Frashëri Paylaşılamayan Aydın”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No. 126, June 2004, 43.

left the Drita Society in 1887 when it was abolished and re-organized as Dituria, established another society, once again called Drita.<sup>16</sup> The Drita Society established by N.N. Naçio on January 9, 1887 became one of the most important organizations around which nationalist Albanians, residing in Romania, gathered.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the encouragement provided by Naçio, a newspaper called Sqipetari/Albanezul was established with the help of donations of one or two hundred Franks collected from each member of the society. The paper, the regular authors of which were students who were ‘paid in exchange for the articles they submit’, was published in both Albanian and Romanian. In this way, it was assumed that the Romanian government would appreciate the contribution made to the popularization of the Romanian language.<sup>18</sup> Since the assurances given by the newspaper, that it wished to protect the territorial integrity of the Ottoman State and acted to prevent any attempt to the contrary, were not found convincing by the Ottoman government; the distribution of Sqipetari was prohibited within the Ottoman territories from September 12, 1888.<sup>19</sup> The publication of the newspaper, which published twenty-nine issues from August 1888 to January 1890, was continued by the Dituria Society, was the opponent of N.N. Naçio, as of July 1895, after the Romanian title was brought to the front. However, its publication did not last long either, only until January 1896.<sup>20</sup>

In a letter, delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 28, 1892, the Chairman of the Drita Society, N.N.

<sup>16</sup> Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, 233.

<sup>17</sup> Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 148.

<sup>18</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.TKM. (Yıldız Perakende Tahrirat-ı Ecnebiye ve Mabeyn Mütercimliği), 13/37, 3 M 1306.

<sup>19</sup> BOA, BEO, 68/5045, 19 S 1310. BOA, BEO, 49/3642, 16 M 1310. BOA, HR.SYS. (Hariciye Siyasi), 155/25, October 29, 1903.

<sup>20</sup> Clayer, *Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, 234-236.

Naçio,<sup>21</sup> criticized the government for not thwarting the harmful activities of foreign states in the Balkans and not appreciating those who were making attempts in this direction; he argued that the Drita Albanian Society was established in order to prevent foreign ambitions in the Balkan Peninsula. Although the society claimed that it aimed to defend the interests of the Ottoman State, to report traitors and to fight against intrigues of foreigners with the newspaper “Sqipetari”, it appears that the paper somewhat encouraged Albanian nationalism.<sup>22</sup>

On May 10, 1892, an Albano-Romanian Cultural Institute, called Lumina, was founded in Bucharest under the guidance of the Chairman of the Drita Albanian Society, N.N. Naçio.<sup>23</sup> Within the body of the institute, a boarding school was established, the expenses of which would be covered by the Drita Society, and initially to which fifteen students would be enrolled. The aim of the Lumina Institute was established as, ‘to train prospective Albanian teachers regardless of their religious origin’. Young Albanians, chosen from different regions of Albania and Macedonia, would be dispatched as academics/teachers to open Albanian

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<sup>21</sup> N.N. Naçio was put on trial on charges of murdering Frukides (?), the Deputy Consulate of Greece in Egypt and sentenced to death. However, he escaped from Egypt and took refuge in Romania; yet, although he requested protection from the Bucharest Embassy of the Ottoman Empire in the capacity of being an Ottoman subject as an Albanian, his request was denied. Through the newspaper *Sqipetari* he published under the auspices of Romania, he promoted the Romanian interests in Macedonia. BOA, BEO, 68/5045, 19 S 1310. Ibrahim Temo states that N. Naçio, whom he characterizes as a friend of Turks, afforded great assistance to and took a close interest in him when he escaped to Bucharest. Ibrahim Temo, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Teşekkülü ve Hidemât-ı Vataniye ve İnkılâb-ı Millîye Dair Hatıratım*, Medjidina, Rumenia, 1939, Biz İttihatçılar, edited by Nurer Uğurlu, (İstanbul, Örgün Yayınevi, 2009), 98-99. Furthermore, see Bilgin Çelik, “*Romanya’da Bir Jön Türk: İbrahim (Ethem) Temo ve Romanya’daki Faaliyetleri*”, *History Studies*, Vol. 2/2, 2010: 363-375.

<sup>22</sup> BOA, BEO, 49/3642, 16 M 1310.

<sup>23</sup> BOA, BEO, 195/14564.

schools, in various towns and districts in countries such as Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Russia, Austro-Hungary and Italy, wherever Albanians lived. Once again, expenses would be covered by the Drita Society and the Drita Society would support every aspect of these 'young pioneers', who in turn would fight, risking their lives if necessary, in order to fulfill the 'holy task' entrusted to them. It was also considered to be the holy duty of the Drita Society to provide material and moral support, for the families of national martyrs, in the event that the 'young pioneers' lost their lives for this cause.

At the end of the society's charter, it was stated, in a somewhat threatening tone, that anyone who did not respect this 'holy task' and did not follow the instructions would be considered unfaithful and a traitor and that he/she, as well as his/her family, would forfeit the right to benefit from any donations or rights granted by the Drita Society. Furthermore, they would be captured and punished in accordance with the old customs and traditions of the Albanian nation.

At the institute, where students lived with draconian discipline, it was decided to teach the following courses: 1- Religions: Orthodoxy, Mohammedanism and Catholicism, 2- Languages: Turkish, Albanian and Romanian, 3- Theoretical and Applied Pedagogy, 4- General History and Geography (mainly that of the Ottoman Empire), 5- Mathematics, 6- Natural Sciences, 7- State Organization and the Ottoman Administrative Law, 8- Calligraphy and Painting, 9- Music, 10- Physical Education, and 11- one of the widely spoken modern languages, which would meet the requirements of the Ottoman Empire in the best possible way.

All the facilities and resources were available at school for students with different religious origins in order for them to fulfill the requirements of their own faith. The



Turkish teacher to be employed at the institute would also attend to the religion lessons of Muslim students and function as well as that of an 'imam'. Students would also be taken to relevant places of worship, so as to perform their religious services, during religious and national holidays.<sup>24</sup>

After completing their education, the students were knowledgeable about the ambitions of 'the Greeks and the Slavs' to annihilate Albania by invading the Ottoman State, the Balkan Peninsula and Istanbul, and would be designated under the title, Missionary Teacher, in the regions where the Greeks and Slavs were active, in order to counteract their intentions. In Durrës, various attempts were made by the Drita Society during 1892 to recruit pupils for the aforementioned school. However, the Greek Patriarch, who was in the process of compelling Christian Albanians in the region to speak Greek, so as to 'Greekify' them, threatened the Christian Albanians with interdiction from the churches; in other words, if they sent their children to that school they would be excommunicated.<sup>25</sup>

Believing that 'the Greeks and the Slavs' were trying to eradicate Albanian national identity from the Balkan Peninsula through education and teachings, and indoctrinate them by spending vast amounts of money, along with foreign schools, the Drita Society even asked the Ottoman government to appoint a Muslim teacher to teach Albanian and Turkish children with a stipend of 200 Franks a month, in order to prove their sincerity about the school they had in fact opened to maintain the national existence of Albanians. Yet, the Ottoman government showed no interest in either this request nor to the charter of the school, sent by the Society,<sup>26</sup> and with an official order dated September 6, 1892, it instructed the governors of Ioannina, Shkodra,

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<sup>24</sup> BOA, BEO, 199/14877, 26 L 1310.

<sup>25</sup> BOA, BEO, 49/3642, 16 M 1310.

<sup>26</sup> BOA, BEO, 49/3642, 16 M 1310.

Kosovo, Monastir and Thessalonica to expediently forbid families from even considering sending their children to this school.<sup>27</sup>

In 1896, the Drita Society requested the Ottoman government to make certain reforms in Albania. Within this framework, the Society asked that Kosovo, Monastir, Ioannina and Shkodra be united into a single province, an Albanian governor to be appointed, that civil servants familiar with both Albanian and Turkish be employed, that Albanian and Turkish to be taught together at schools, that Albanians do their military service in Albania, and that Albanians should be granted the freedom to choose their language of worship.<sup>28</sup>

In 1898, Tiranlı Murat Bey and Faik Bey, who had been publishing an Albanian newspaper called 'Albania' in Brussels, organized the Christian Albanians living throughout Romania to send telegrams to the Ottoman government in order to assure certain rights for their cognates living in Albania, and to ensure that Albanian would become a compulsory language at schools; to this end they intended to have hundreds of telegrams sent to the government.<sup>29</sup> The actual goal of Faik Bey and Murat Bey was to achieve autonomy for Albania, and accordingly, they sought to get material and moral support of the Christian Albanians living in Romania, collecting 100,000 Franks to organize revolutionary legions and to start an insurrection in Albania. They also planned to open schools with some of the money they raised.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> BOA, BEO, 68/5045, 19 S 1310.

<sup>28</sup> Süleyman Kâni İrtem, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Makedonya Meselesi Balkanların Kördüğümü*, edited by Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, (Istanbul, Temel Yay., 1999), 123.

<sup>29</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS. (Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı), 391/ 46, 14 B 1316.

<sup>30</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS., 391/57, 16 B 1316.

A congress was held on November 13, 1898 with the participation of Albanian nationalists who were in Bucharest at that time.<sup>31</sup> After long discussions, the members of the Albanian Makatib Society, who organized the congress, demanded in a telegram they sent from Bucharest to Yıldız on November 25, 1898, that Albanian courses should be taught in all schools without exception, stating that there was not a single Albanian school in Albania even though there were almost five thousand foreign schools, and it was not in the best interest of the government to postpone Albanian education while newspapers and books in Albanian were being published.<sup>32</sup>

On July 31, 1899, the journalist, Georges C. Mexi, published an invitation, entitled “An Invitation to Our Albanian Brothers,” with bore the signatures of Derviş Hima, the Central Committee Deputy of Kigalık Muslim Albanians, and Yaşar Sadık Erebera, the Deputy of Kigalık Muslim Albanians, calling Albanian nationalists to a congress, which was planned to be held in Bucharest on September 27, 1899.<sup>33</sup> Stating that “There is no other community in Europe the circumstances of which is more regretful than us, Albanians. Your fathers, mothers, children back home are lamenting under the yoke of slavery put on them by savages... Beloved compatriots, for the sake of the prosperity and salvation of our motherland, stand up now and spare no sacrifice for our divine cause...”. The invitation tried to arouse nationalist feelings among Albanians and called all Albanians living outside Albania, in Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, and Egypt. The invitation also pointed out that a resolution, containing eight articles, including requests to be communicated to the Ottoman government, such as opening Albanian national schools and

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<sup>31</sup> Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 135.

<sup>32</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK. (Yıldız Perakende Başkitabet Dairesi Maruzatı), 58/6, 11 B 1316. Bartl, Bartl, *Milli Bağımsızlık Hareketleri*, 250-251.

<sup>33</sup> BOA, HR.SYS., 129/25, October 28, 1899.

accepting Albanian and Turkish as official language, would be discussed as well. Having been informed about the preparations for the congress, the Ottoman Consulate in Bucharest characterized it as ‘contrary to the interests of the government’, and started to take the necessary actions before the Romanian government, demanding that the congress be banned and the organizers expelled.<sup>34</sup> In this context, paying attention to those who applied for a passport to travel to Romania and who were suspected to be connected with the Albanian committee, it was decided to prevent these persons from going to Romania at all, and gather information about Albanian committees in Romania that were engaged in provocative activities.<sup>35</sup> Another cultural association active in Bucharest was the Shpresa (Hope) Society. The objective of this society, which was founded on September 12, 1900 mainly by university students, was defined as illuminating the Albanian people.

Albanian nationalists living in Romania occasionally met up at various conferences, where they exchanged views on cultural and political matters, to set a course for themselves. At a conference held on January 1905 in Brăila by an Albanian society called, The Order of Thought of Young Albanians, speeches on the reform, publication, and generalization of the Albanian language for the development and progress of Albanians were delivered. At the end of the conference, which called for financial aid, and to reach out to Albanians living in other European countries, particularly in order to arouse interest in European public opinion, it was decided to send a telegram of appreciation to the King as the Romanian government patronized them hospitably.<sup>36</sup>

The Albanian, Ibrahim Temo, who was among the founders of *İttihat-ı Osmani* (*The Ottoman Union*), which

<sup>34</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS., 399/47, 21 Ra 1317.

<sup>35</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS., 398/84, 19 Ra 1317.

<sup>36</sup> BOA, HR.SYS., 155/33, 28 Ocak 1905. BOA, HR.SYS., 129/41, February 17, 1905.

was the core of *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (*Committee of Union and Progress*), had been in close contact with Albanians during the time he spent in Romania. Arriving in Romania on November 1, 1895, upon the invitation of Nikolla Naçio, Ibrahim Temo settled in the Lumina Albano-Romanian Cultural Institute in Bucharest, where he arrived after Constanza. In his memoirs Temo evaluated the status of Albanians in Romania as, “*The Christian Albanians in Romania were separated into two groups. The rich were philhellenic, making propaganda against Ottomanism, whereas the rest, who were gathered around the ‘Drita’ (The Light) Party led by Naçio Efendi, were friendly towards the Ottoman Empire. The latter group defended Muslim Albanians coming from country, and even the Young Turks.*”

<sup>37</sup> Ibrahim Temo also explains how Nikolla Naçio got the idea to establish an association called “Bashkimi”:

...Macedonian Vlachs, who were gathered around the Romanian newspaper published by Stefan Mihaileanu in Bucharest, Turks stuck in Bucharest and the Naçio-Temo faction of Albanians who were separated into two groups back then formed the committee of friends of the Ottoman Empire. During the organization of this committee, Naçio Efendi asked me about the expression ‘Union and Progress’, and said, if this union has been forging ahead, let us spread it to make propaganda under this name –the Albanian for union is ‘Bashkimi’- and constitute branches throughout Albania. As such, propaganda activities in line with the program of the ‘Union and Progress’ have started. However, certain Unionists created a dichotomy for their own interests by interpreting this idea spreading all over Albania as if it were a national movement to the detriment of Turkishness, and caused the familiar vicious outcomes.<sup>38</sup>

Within this framework, the Drituria, Drita and Shpresa Albanian societies came together, on December 8, 1906, to establish a new Albanian society in Bucharest called the Bashkimi Albanian Society of Literature. The

<sup>37</sup> Ibrahim Temo, *İttihat ve Terakki*, 97.

<sup>38</sup> Ibrahim Temo, *İttihat ve Terakki*, 160-161.

society was founded in order to spread the Albanian language, to open schools in Albanian in Bucharest and Albania, to publish and finance periodicals, and to get these works in Albanian into Albania. The flag of the Bashkimi Albanian Society of Literature was adopted as an eagle figure in the center on a white and red background, gilded on both sides, and the name of the society.<sup>39</sup> In general, the Albanian committees presence in Bucharest were characterized as Christian Albanian committees, whereas the Muslim Albanians living in Bucharest were considered as ‘devout men loyal to the sultan’.<sup>40</sup>

### Conclusion

The societies Drita, Drituria, Shpresa and the Bashkimi Albanian Society of Literature, which was founded after the unification of the former three societies, rendered Bucharest important in the development of Albanian nationalism. Therefore, Albanian nationalists have always remembered Romania with gratitude due to its assistance in their political and cultural endeavors. Owing to the printing houses established in Romania, it became possible to print Albanian books, newspapers and journals, the printing of which was forbidden in Ottoman territories, especially in Istanbul. These works, which were followed by Albanian intellectuals with great interest, made significant contributions to the formation of a nationalist intellectual circle in Albania. Besides this, many textbooks written by Şemseddin Sami and his brother Naim Fraşeri were also printed in Romania and delivered to schools in Albania, which in turn helped with efforts to boost the rise of Albanian nationalism through education in the mother tongue. The Lumina Albano-Romanian Cultural Institute, established by N. Naçio, served as an institution to train teachers of Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim origin with a

<sup>39</sup> BOA, HR.SYS., 155/36, February 4, 1907.

<sup>40</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA., 35/97, 6 Ra 1318.

nationalist sentiment. Through the education of Albanian children of different religions and denominations at the same institution, the school intended to constitute national unity and solidarity among Albanians

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