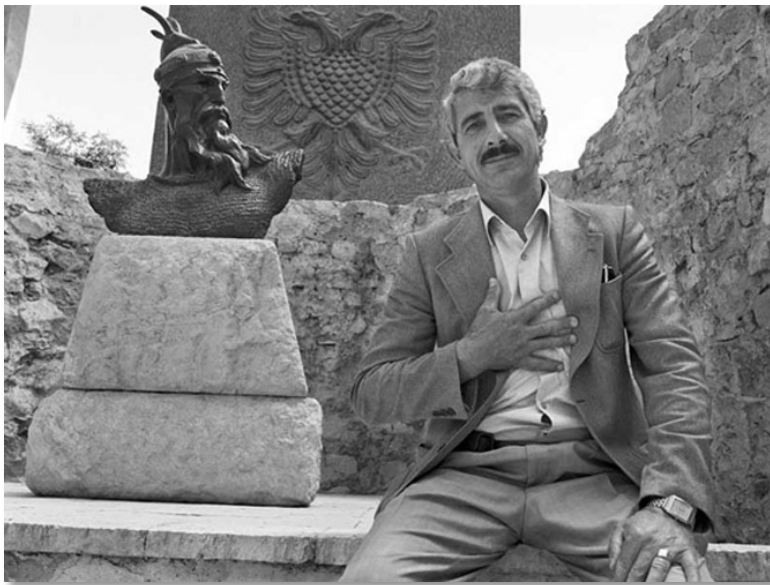


LESSON 2: RESOURCE 8

Ali Sheqer Pashkaj



“Why did my father save a stranger at the risk of his life and the entire village? My father was a devout Muslim. He believed that to save one life is to enter paradise.”

Our traditional home is in Pukë. My father owned a general store with food provisions. It was the only store of its kind for many miles around. One day a German transport rolled by with nineteen Albanian prisoners on their way to hard labor, and one Jew who

was to be shot. My father spoke excellent German and invited the Nazis into his store and offered them food and wine. He plied them with wine until they became drunk.

Meanwhile he hid a note in a piece of melon and gave it to the young Jew. It instructed him to jump out and flee into the woods to a designated place. The Nazis were furious over the escape, but my father claimed innocence. They brought my father into the village and lined him up against a wall to extract information about where the Jew was hiding.

Four times they put a gun to his head. They came back and threatened to burn down the village if my father didn't confess. My father held out, and finally they left. My father retrieved the man from the forest and hid him for two years in his home until the war was over. His name was Yeoshua Baruchowicz. There were thirty families in this village, but no one knew that my father was sheltering a Jew. Yeoshua is still alive. He is a dentist and lives in Mexico.

Story as told by Enver Alia Sheqer (son of Ali Sheqer Pashkaj)