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**CHARITY AND BENEFACTORS IN BULGARIA – BETWEEN TRUST
AND SKEPTICISM, DEFERENCE AND DENIAL (LATE 19TH
CENTURY – 1940S)**

(Summary)

The author focuses her attention on two major problems related to the charity sector in Bulgaria: its ambiguous public perception and the role of the state and its institutions in building its public image. Unlike education, which the society invariably recognized as a value, and all its development initiatives were considered laudable, a number of other causes did not enjoy such success. Some were slowly gaining popularity, others were perceived with outright distrust or even rejection. The reasons are mainly related to the then level of maturity of the civil sector, to the modernization of society as a whole. State and local governments in major cities worked to promote philanthropic events. Thus, the understanding of charity as a laudable and trustworthy activity, which educated citizens in public solidarity, mutual assistance and empathy, began to prevail in society.