

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a professor in the Ionian University but as a Corfiot also I would like to express my emotion for the realization of this event.

Today we honor two completely different personalities, a Norwegian and a Corfiot. Fridjof Nansen and Albert Cohen. But what really connects them? Two things: Their passion for the protection of refugees and the island of Corfu.

Before presenting to you the contribution of the Laboratory of legal, economic, political and technical translation (ENOPOTEM) of the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpretation, in the publication of the book presented today, I would like to mention something which is not particularly known. One of the basic interlocutors of Fr. Nansen in the League of Nations, when the incident of the occupation of Corfu by the Italians in 1923 was discussed, after the murder of the general Telini at the Greek-Albanian borders, was the Corfiot jurist and diplomat former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Governments of Venizelos , Nikolaos Politis, my grandfather's brother.

But let's see the contribution of our laboratory (ENOPOTEM) in the translation of this book. As we have already mentioned, this laboratory, as part of the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpretation of the Ionian University, gives to the students the possibility to practice translation in different fields.

One day my friend, doctor Spiros Giourgas , proposed me the collaboration of the laboratory with the Association "Friends of the Foundation : Memory of Albert Cohen" . He asked me if we can translate Cohen's text , where he presents his action in the International Agency for the refugees just after the 2nd World War and three texts of researchers who also refer to the action of Albert Cohen. The selection of the texts has been made by Mr. Max Mamou whom I thank very much for our cooperation so far.

Please allow me, at this point, to give the speech, and in this way to honor them, to the two students, alumni now of our department, who translated these texts, so they can present their work. First will speak Theodora Vgeni, who will tell us how she felt, as a young person, when she was called to translate texts which refer to the concept of "refugee" and then Athanassia Tzoumanika, who will refer to the difficulties they had to face as translators, given that the texts they were called to translate present particular difficulties, mainly of factual nature.

Before giving the speech to Mr Giorgos Gianakopoulos please allow me to make a brief reference to something that has a direct relationship to the work of Nansen and Cohen but also with the work being done to our department.

Thanks to the work of Nansen and Cohen, the refugees were finally able to acquire rights, to acquire the precious "passport for the refugees" Their mission however, has not been completed. The refugee, as a non native speaker, often faces serious communication problems when having to deal with public and international authorities. The international committee has not yet developed a legal framework to ensure the inalienable right of the refugee to his unhindered and without weaknesses communication with the authorities to

which he is addressed. The solution comes inevitably from the translation and the interpretation. We can not assign this peculiar communication to persons who just claim to know a foreign language. The translator and the interpreter have to be properly prepared and certified by an official authority.

Pressure should be applied at all levels so that the refugee's rights are fully safeguarded, since a simple mistake of the interpreter (unfortunately it happens) may lead the refugee to life's worse paths. It's up to us to take with vigor the torch from Nansen and Cohen and fight for the "Translator and Interpreter for Refugees".