

Portraits

Highlighting the exceptional contribution
of European Jewish Women

Louise Cohen

Mother of Albert Cohen
(1870-1943)

Born Louise Ferro in Corfu. She is Marco Cohen's wife and Albert's mother. A diplomat and writer, he is the author, among others, of "Belle du Seigneur", "Solal," "Book of my Mother" Louise's father, Elie Ferro, was Italian and Royal Notary of Corfu. She spoke the Judeo-Venetian dialect. Louise married Marco in 1894, and lived with her father-in-law Abraham, a successful merchant (his soap factory was considered to be the largest at the time), President of the Jewish community of Corfu, he was a respected man. Albert was born ten months after the wedding. Louise gave her son undying love. Cohen said of his mother: "She had everything that makes genius, except culture... My mother was a constant surprise" The soap company failed, anti-Semitic hatred took over the island and they left for Marseille in 1900. Albert was five years old. Louise then worked with her husband in a grocery store specializing in eggs and in olive oil trade. Life is difficult, and Albert lives between two worlds: school in French and at home, a Jewish kingdom that he evokes in "Les Valeureux".



Louise struggled to cope with her husband's mood swings and took refuge in her love for Albert. Albert Cohen said of her: "She blessed me with devotion and checked me with the passion of a lioness, to see if I was still healthy and not sad or anxious." "My mother had no "me", but a son." Louise Cohen inspired "Book of My Mother" which bears witness to maternal love.