

Nitsos: Last Words To TNH



Nikolaos Nitsos' family left Tsamantas when he was a boy; in Constantinople he was trained in several languages. He was, for years, as Dr. Dimitrios Konstadakopoulos, of the University of the West of England, explained, secretary to his uncle, prominent Metropolitan Nathaniel, who was posted in Serres (Thrace,) Proussa (today Turkey's Bursa) and, finally, Epirus' Preveza. He also was a reporter for Constantinople-based Greek papers. After his uncle's death, Nitsos turned to commercial activities in Constantinople. But upon his return to Tsamantas in 1914, as Hellenic Benefit Society of Tsamanta(s) Vice President Zoulas noted: World War I "entrapped" him, for life.

Nitsos used the time to write his book on the village in 1920. But strife in Asia Minor prevented his return. "He ended his life in the village," explained Zoulas of the bachelor. Publisher Aristides Caratzas said Nitsos' book is full of facts, but also expressions of a "Greece waking up" after Ottoman rule. Konstadakopoulos said: "Written in the early days of independence from the Ottomans, an era of great uncertainty, his book reveals his underlying anguish over the security of his village's hard-won status." Nitsos wrote to New York papers Atlantis and Ethnikos Kirikas (The National Herald) too. Konstadakopoulos notes that Nitsos' last dispatch, on his deathbed, was written to this paper in January 1940. He warned: "... the horizon is turning darker and darker, foretelling the coming storm. The provocative activities of the Italian invaders along the border, in blatant cooperation with the Albanians, are a clear threat to the independence and territorial integrity of our fatherland." He died a month later and the Italian invasion took place on October 28, when Greece's "Oxi" (No) would give Greek Americans a new prestige.

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