

Nicos Latronis And Bertha Benveniste At A Wedding



This is a picture of Nicos Latronis (first from left) and my mother in law Bertha Benveniste (first from right).

During the war, when I escaped to Athens, my brother was already living at our friends' house, Nicos Latronis and Antonis Papachrysanthou.

They were cousins and friends even though Latronis was slightly older than Papachrysanthou. Nicos Latronis was one of our customers and had his shop in Patras. But they had also opened another one in Pireus. Latronis was a very good friend of Uncle Solomon.

He also knew my father. Solomon was also a very good friend of his brother, Thanos Latronis, who once was Patras' mayor. Danny, who had gone to Athens for the Polytechnic, had remained in Athens.

One day, Latronis met him accidentally on the street. He told him, "I hear that in Thessaloniki things are not going well", etc. "You should know that for you there is no problem.

When you feel that you cannot make it, you will come to my house. You will come to me". And instead of my brother going on his own, he brought me with him as well.

When he heard that I was coming, he called Latronis. He told him, "look my brother is coming too". "Allright", he says, "you will come with your brother".

Nikos Latronis kept us as his guests in the house of Papachrysanthou. I remember my first impression when I got there. They lived in Pagkrati in a very nice house that overlooked the 2nd Cemetery.

The house was on a hill and we could see all the way down to the airport. I remember Easter's Eve when I first met Antonis Papachrysanthou. He was cooking intestines. We celebrated Easter, went to the Resurrection, "our cousins" they were saying about us.

The house was very big. My brother and I shared one room. Latronis with his wife Dina had another room, and Antonis had another room. At the time his sister lived there too. She was called Ourania. But she later left, she didn't stay until the end.

We had a really good time with them. Latronis had an employee, who was his girlfriend as well. She was a beautiful woman, very beautiful, and she was also from Patras. Latronis got her pregnant and he decided to marry her.

After a couple of months they got married. The wedding took place in the house. There were us and a few close friends present.

Latronis and Papachrysanthou didn't think that they were risking at the time. But that's how it was. There were many like him. Latronis was very religious, he would go to church every Sunday and he felt it was his duty to help anyone who was in danger. I am certain that this is how it was. And because of the friendship that he had with my uncle.

Sometimes we would go out at night, to a little tavern to have a glass of retsina. We would go to the outdoor cinema in Zappeio. But we generally avoided going around much.

We had money with us. We had brought money and we had sent many goods to Latronis to keep. My father had sent them. He had sent about 60 boxes of ironware. They trusted Latronis. At that time having goods was like gold. Sometimes they would open one box and sell it.

Later, my uncle Solomon came too. Suddenly he rings and says, "I am in Athens, too". And Antonis says, "we've been hit by a bomb". You could tell my uncle was a Jew, because he didn't speak Greek well. He spoke Greek, but with a bit of an accent...

Besides that, he had been in Athens before and some people around the neighborhood knew him. Uncle Solomon didn't have a false i.d.. I think that he later got one. He stayed hidden in Athens until the end of the war.