

The sanatorium of Asvestohori



On 17/4/19, the first class of our school, in collaboration with the lyceum of Philyro, visited the Institute of History in Thessaloniki, where we attended a photo exhibition for the sanatorium of Asvestohori and a short theatrical performance about it.



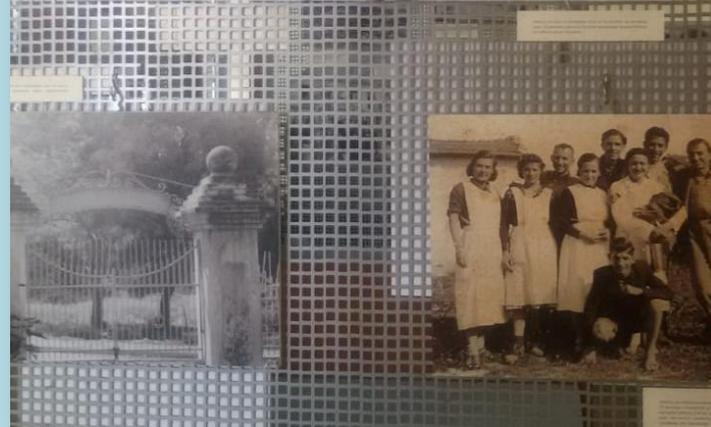


The Sanatorium of Asvestohori was built in August 1920 for the treatment of tuberculosis and is associated with the time when tuberculosis broke in our country as the infectious disease and hit indiscriminately, children, young and elderly, whole families. It was the disease that spread and developed mainly in deprived social strata, where unhealthy conditions and malnutrition prevailed.



However, the worst consequence, due to the contagious nature of the disease and the long-standing problems, that caused to sick people and their families, was stigmatization of tuberculous patients, marginalization, rejection, exclusion, fear and threat of imminent death.

The neighboring villages, Asvestohori and Hortiatis, faced the patients with suspicion, dissatisfaction, and even hostility. The fear of the illness due to high mortality, combined with ignorance and social bias, even led to violent and uncontrollable behaviors.



The history of the sanatorium of Asvestohori

Those patients who did not find a bed to settle in Sanatorium built a hut in the enclosure of the Orient, or settled outside the enclosure. There were also those who survived and did not return to their homelands as usually they did not have contact with their families. They were installed there because they were unable to work and the climatic conditions there, were appropriate for their health.

This created a whole village with huts and houses, the "Tuberculosis", opposite the hospital, known as "Fymatiopolis of Asvestohori", a unique case in Greece and in Europe. They built houses and school, got married and made families, claimed the creation of an independent community, and promoted social inclusion through the creation of unions and long-lasting struggles.

In 1949 the community was recognized by the state as "Exohi". The Sanatorium created many new jobs as well, like nurses, cleaners or technicians. The first few years they worked in the Sanatorium unpaid, simply ensuring their diet.



Πορτολαφάκι, 1945



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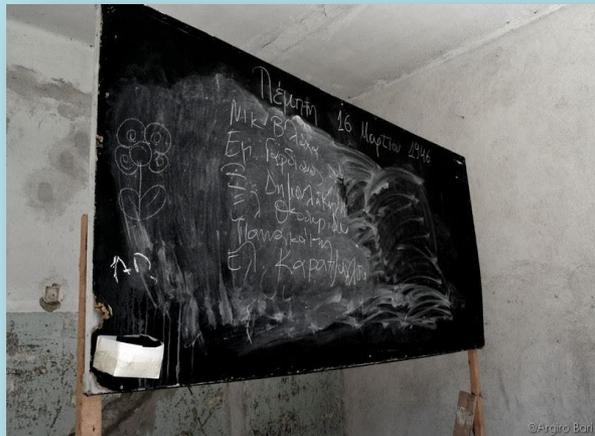
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The theatrical play about the sanatorium of Asvestohori

In the second half of the presentation, we watched a short theatrical performance about a girl being hospitalized. Her name was Katerina, she came from a village in Florina and at the age of 13 she entered the sanatorium. Her parents abandoned her, with a small suitcase, because of her illness. They promised her that they will take her back to the village but no one ever sought her. The only thing that her family offered to her, was a basket of goodies at the entrance to the Sanatorium. She spent three years in the room, and when she had to leave, she wrote to her parents to come and take her. However, no one ever replied.

So this play emphasized on social exclusion and discrimination due to Tuberculosis and how this behavior had influenced the psychology of the patients.

The hospital now:



References:

<http://www.thessmemory.gr/>

<https://parallaximag.gr/thessaloniki/fymatioupoli-sto-asvestochori-spanies-eikones-kai-oli-istoria-tis>

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