

Stray dogs mingle at protest rallies

By DEMETRIS NELLAS
Associated Press Writer

ATHENS, Greece – They roam the streets of Athens unperturbed, a blue collar around their necks indicating that they have been neutered by the city authorities.

Athens’ stray dogs naturally seek company. And there’s no better place to find lots of it than at one of Athens’ many demonstrations.

Photographers have documented the presence of several yellowish dogs at boisterous anti-government protests over the years, barking and baring their teeth at police in what appears to be canine political statements. One, Kanellos (cinnamon in Greek, from its color) used the Athens Polytechnic school as its base and was a constant companion for over a decade to anarchist rioters until he died, in July 2008.

He has his own Facebook page, with nearly 1,900 fans and a song dedicated to him.

Photos of other yellowish dogs at the side of demonstrators have become an online sensation in recent days, with some websites describing them as evidence that a single, highly active dog is a constant presence at protests. AP photos show at least two different dogs mingling with protesters and taking on police.

The dogs appear to be immune to the effects of tear gas, but are very frightened when riot police use stun grenades. Protesters pet them and police are not unfriendly, either, although the nature of their job does not allow them to give their attention to the animals.

In brief

Acropolis facelift completed

Following years of delicate work and the restoration of 1,094 pieces weighing nearly 3,000 tons, cranes and scaffolding are being removed from the Acropolis of Athens for good.

“After 2,500 years of life, continuous assaults by conquerors, atmospheric pollution, and the destructive use of the monument’s temples throughout the years, we could say that the Acropolis suffered badly,” said Mary Ioannidou, civil engineer-in-chief of the restoration work.

An interesting feature which came up during the restoration work was the discovery of colored depictions on the temple of Erechtheum, known for its Caryatids porch, as well as parts of a written adornment.

The Acropolis Restoration Service is now cooperating with the British Museum to examine the relation of the Egyptian blue pigment with the findings of the Acropolis.

First Greek “Oscars” presented

On May 3, the Hellenic Film Academy presented the awards for the 2009 productions in the film industry at the Athens Concert hall.

“Dogtooth,” (Kynodontas) a film by director Giorgos Lanthimos, which won the “Un certain regard prix” at the 2009 Cannes Festival, was presented with the award for best film.

In total, “Dogtooth” won five awards, while director Panos Koutras with the film “Strella” won four.

Antonis Kafetzopoulos won the award for best actor for his performance in the film “Akadimia Platonos” and Mina Orfanou, the award for best actress for the role of the transsexual in “Strella.”



Many members of this Greek Jewish family were rounded up in Athens on March 25, 1944, and deported to Nazi concentration camps, where they were executed. A descendent, Laura Zell, has produced a film, “In the Shadow of the Acropolis,” with the help of professional film producer and director Maxine Davis.

In the Shadow of the Acropolis

A granddaughter’s film tells of Jewish family in Athens

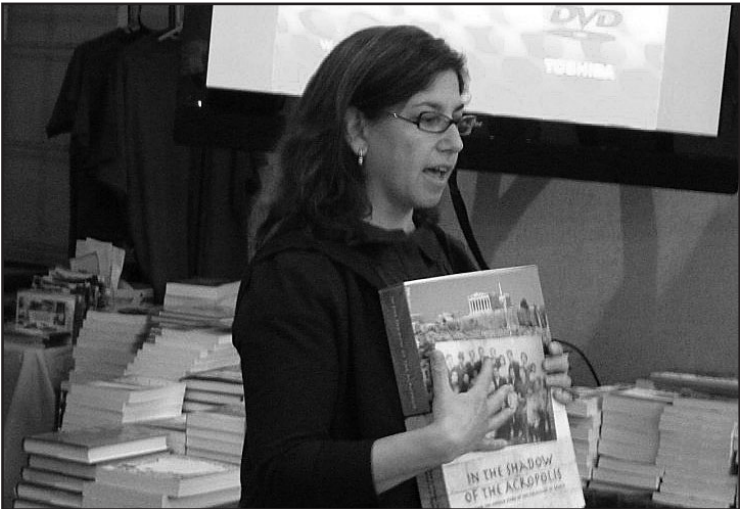
By MARCIA HADDAD IKONOMOPOULOS

Laura Zelle is not a filmmaker by profession. She is director of Tolerance Minnesota, an award-winning educational initiative of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas. She came to make this film, “In the Shadow of the Acropolis,” with the collaboration of Maxine Davis, a professional film producer and director, because who better could tell the story of her own family?

Growing up in the “shadow of the Holocaust,” Laura’s own mother was a hidden child in Greece during the Occupation. Laura well knew the story of what happened to Greek Jews in World War II; her own grandfather Menachem and many members of her grandmother Rosa’s family were deported from Athens to the camps in April of 1944, rounded up “in the shadow of the Acropolis.”

This excellent film dramatically tells the story of the Ackos family, Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews, who like many Jews from Ioannina had left the city of their birth at the beginning of the 20th century to pursue economic opportunities elsewhere in Greece.

Laura’s mother and other members of the Ackos family were born in Preveza, but fate would find them in Athens on March 25th, when the Jews of



Laura Zelle, a descendent of the Ackos family, presents her film, “In the Shadow of the Acropolis,” April 25 at Kehila Kedosha Janina, a Romaniote Greek Jewish synagogue and museum in New York City.



This photograph of the Ackos family was taken in Athens shortly before the father, Menachem, was arrested and deported to Auschwitz concentration camp, where he was murdered. The mother and children were sheltered by a Greek Orthodox widow.

the city were rounded up and sent to Haidari, awaiting deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Rosa Ackos would owe her life and that of her five children to a Greek Orthodox woman who gave them sanctuary, risking her own life to do so. The family’s savior was a widow, Mrs. Sarianou. Her name is now among the Righteous Among Nations at Yad Vashem.

Rosa’s husband, Menachem, was murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, leaving her to care for five young children. Finding it so hard to remain in Greece, Rosa accepted the aid of Jewish organizations and was relocated to Minnesota in the 1950s. Her children married, giving her many grandchildren, all of whom have learned the story of what happened to their family “in the shadow of the Acropolis.”

One of Rosa’s grandchildren, Laura, has now told that story to the world.

Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to host the New York premier of this film on April 25. The standing-room-only audience, many of whom well knew the story, having lived it themselves, watched in rapt attention with tears in their eyes.

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos is museum director of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Anyone interested in purchasing this film can contact her at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzer.net.

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