Stray dogs mingle at protest rallies

By DEMITRIOS NELIAS
Associated Press Writer

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

Athens' stray dogs normally seek comfort. 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 anti-government protests over the years, barking and baring their teeth at police in what appears to have become political statements. One, Kounos (cinnamon in Greek), is a black and yellow mixed-breed with short ears who attended Polytechnic school as its base and was a constant companion for over a decade to anarchists restorers 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 site of demonstrations 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 tear gas, but are not yet used to this.

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 descendant, Laura Zell, has produced a film, “In the Shadow of the Acropolis,” with the help of professional film producer and director Maxine Davis.

Laura Zelle is not a filmmaking professor. 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,” during 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 Acropolis,” 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 grand- mother Rosa’s family were deported from Athens to the camps in April of 1944, round up “in the shadow of the Acropolis.”

This excellent film dramatically tells the story of the Ackos family, Greek-speaking Romanies 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 the city were rounded up and sent to Birkenau, awaiting deportation to Auschwitz.

Laura Zelle, a descendant 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.

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,” (Ykoudentos) a film by director Giorgos Lanthimos, won the “Un Certain Regard prize” at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, was presented with the award for best film.

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

At the beginning of the year, Giorgos Lanthimos won the award for best actor for his performance in the Greek film “Akadimia Platonos” and Mina Orfanou, the best actress for her role in the film industry at the Athens Concert hall. In total, “Dogtooth” won five awards, while director Panos Koutras with the film “Steelco” won four.

“Acropolis facelift completes restoration project”

Following years of delicate work and the transportation of 2,000 pieces weighing nearly 3,000 tons, cranes and scaffolding are being removed from the Acropolis of Athens for good.

“Af ter 2,600 years of life, con trasting with the constant presence 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 construction work.

An interesting feature which came up during the restoration work was the discovery of colored depictions on the temple of Hephaistos, which the excavation revealed to be a temple, as well as parts of a written adornment.

The Acropolis Restoration Service is now cooperating with the British Museum in a joint excavation of the Egyptian blue pigment with the findings of the Acropolis.

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A granddaughter’s film tells of Jewish family in Athens

by MARIA HADDAD RONKOPOULOS

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In brief

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