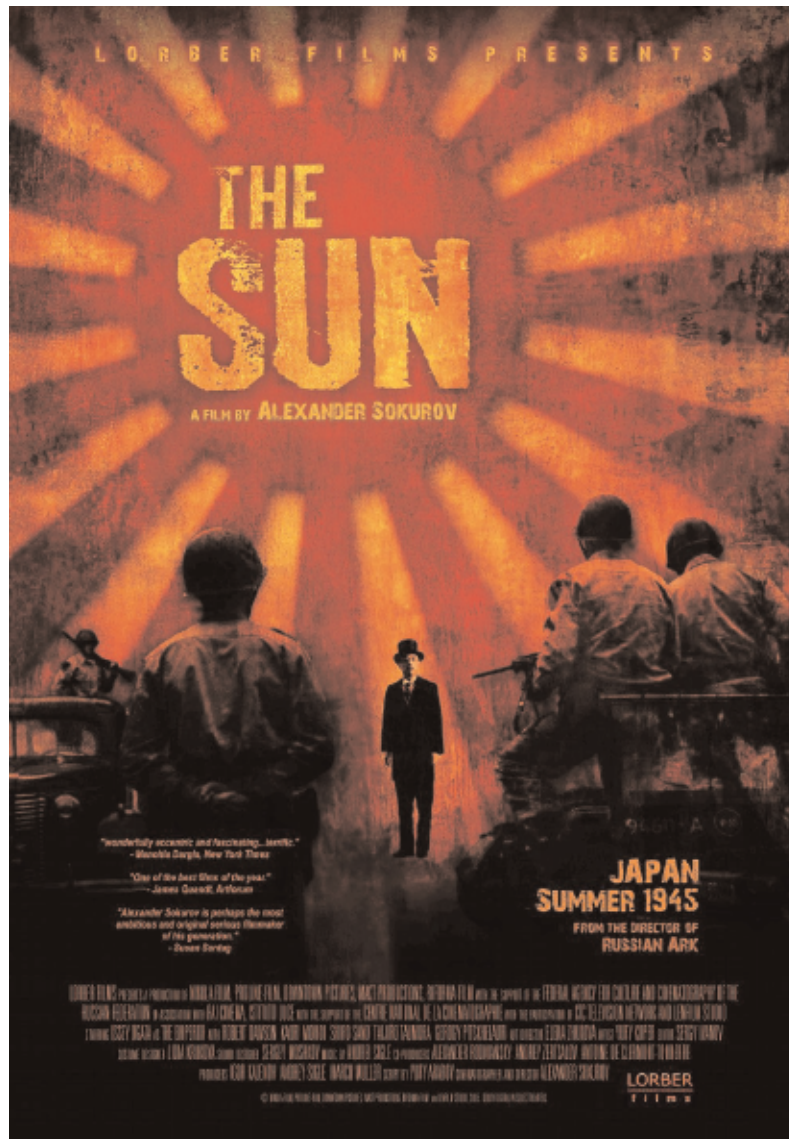


LORBER

f i l m s

# THE SUN

A FILM BY ALEXANDER SOKUROV



For press information, contact Elizabeth Sheldon at (212) 398-3112 or [elizabeth@lorberhtdigital.com](mailto:elizabeth@lorberhtdigital.com)

For press information, contact Elizabeth Sheldon at (212) 398-3112 or [elizabeth@lorberhtdigital.com](mailto:elizabeth@lorberhtdigital.com)

# LORBER

f i l m s

THE SUN

## Crew

Director – ALEXANDER SOKUROV  
Director of Photography – ALEXANDER SOKUROV  
Screenplay – YURY ARABOV  
Art Director – ELENA ZHUKOVA  
Designer – YURY KUPER  
Costume Designer – LIDIA KRUKOVA  
Music – ANDREY SIGLE  
Sound Designer – SERGEY MOSHKOV  
Editor – SERGEY IVANOV  
Producers – IGOR KALENOV, ANDREY SIGLE and MARCO MULLER  
Co-producers – ALEXANDER RODNIANSKY, ANDREY ZERTSALOV and  
ANTOINE DE CLERMONT-TONNERRE

## Cast

Emperor – ISSEY OGATA  
General MacArthur – ROBERT DAWSON  
Empress – KAORI MOMOI  
Chamberlain – SHIRI SANO  
Old Servant – SHINMEI TSUJI  
Director of Institute – TAJIRO TAMURA  
Adjutant of General MacArthur – GEORGY PITSKHELARI  
Prime-minister Suzuki Kantaro – HIROYA MORITA  
Navy Minister Admiral Yonai – TOSHIKI NISHIZAWA  
War Minister Anami – NAOMASA MUSAKA  
Lord-keeper of the Privy Seal Kido – YUSUKE TOZAWA  
Foreign Minister Togo – KOJIRO KUSANAGI  
General Umezu – TETSURO TSUNO  
Chief of the General Staff of the Navy,  
General Toyoda – ROKURO ABE  
Minister of Internal Affairs Abe – JUN HAICHI  
President of the Privy Council Hironuma – KOJUN ITO  
Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu – TORU SHINAGAWA

# LORBER

f i l m s

## THE SUN

Set in occupied Japan during World War II, this film portrays two men wrestling with the burden of history, culture and conflict in order to find a path to the future. From the director of *Father and Son* and *Russian Ark*.

### SYNOPSIS

The action in *The Sun* takes place in occupied Japan from late August 1945 until January 1, 1946. On August 15, Emperor Hirohito made a public appeal to his people to cease military operations, and millions of Japanese were shocked to hear their Emperor's voice for the first time in their lives.

The film portrays the events leading up to two crucial decisions made by Hirohito, both of which of major historical significance. The first was the WW II declaration of surrender, and the second was the renunciation of his divine status. During this period, the Emperor also forms an unlikely bond with the American General Douglas MacArthur who did much to resolve the situation with the minimum of victims.

For these reasons, *The Sun* makes history as the first intimate depiction of Emperor Hirohito on film.

# LORBER

f i l m s

THE SUN

## BACKGROUND

The action in *The Sun* takes place in Japan in the second half of 1945. On August 15, millions of Japanese heard the voice of their Emperor for the first time, when he made an appeal to the armed forces and the people to cease military operations.

As a result of this plea, the American and Allied troops could be sent to the main islands of Japan without fear of conflict, even if millions of Japanese were ready to fight for their Emperor and their country, up to the bitter end. The surrender meant that their lives were saved - as well as those of the Americans, the Chinese, the English, and the soldiers of the Red Army.

This film is unique: for the first time the Emperor of Japan is scrutinized up close, and shown not only as the 124th descendant of the “Goddess of Sun Amaterasu” but also as a human being who suffered deeply with the tragedy in his country.

The leaders of China, Great Britain, the USSR, as well as the majority of the US ruling elite, demanded that the prosecution of by a military tribunal. However, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied occupational forces in Japan, the American General Douglas McArthur, recommended to his President that the Emperor should not be declared a “military criminal”. By this action he prevented a devastating armed conflict of millions of undefeated Japanese soldiers, who followed the command of their Emperor and brought an end to military operations.

Sukorov's *The Sun* also reproduces the Emperor's meetings with General McArthur. In his “Memoirs”, Douglas McArthur wrote: “The Emperor took the responsibility for all the actions of the Japanese government and armed forces, clearly understanding that it threatens him with unavoidable court and death.” “I was amazed,” McArthur continues. “He was an Emperor by birth, but at that moment, I realized that I met the first Japanese gentleman.”

# LORBER

f i l m s

√THE SUN

## – DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS –

- 1 -

*The Sun* is the third chapter of my film tetralogy and is inextricably linked to its predecessors: *Moloch* and *Taurus*. What is it that unites them first of all?

The key is the depiction of the hero who suffers a personal tragedy. We meet Hitler, in *Moloch*, at the start of the collapse of his individuality. We see Lenin, in *Taurus*, strong, violent, not willing to surrender to death, in love with power. Each one of them faces a catastrophe caused by their own decisions and actions. Hitler brings the situation to a senseless tragedy: it is clear that the war is lost but, fulfilling his will, soldiers continue to die. He takes many lives with him to non-existence. And Lenin resists non-existence too - it's as if he casts into the future his dying despair, his intolerance.

It appears that there are different ways out of tragic situations. The Japanese Emperor Hirohito is a symbol of a constructive finale, or to say it correctly, not a finale but a continuation – life. It is possible to see ruins in a destroyed city, but one can also see dozens of spared buildings – to put it in perspective. For that to happen, there is a need for a special kind of human nature.

- 2 -

As a small, puny, thin-voiced scientist involved in hydrobiology, Hirohito wasn't perfectly suitable for tyranny. His palace was burned down during a bombing by the Americans and the Emperor lived either in his bunker underground or in the only spared stone building in the palace territory - the laboratory.

He didn't look like a bloodthirsty god of war at all. Rather, Hirohito chose to save human lives instead of embracing the idea of national pride. In fact, this is the great legacy of Hirohito - and of those American politicians who could understand and appreciate his position. In 1945, Hirohito and McArthur found a way out of the situation that seemed to be insoluble. This is a lesson - good can be strong and clever.

- 3 -

It is difficult to define and understand power in Japan, and the country is known for its quiet, indistinct, deep, and repressed power. The Japanese are not Asian people; they are closer to the Englishman, with their island self-consciousness. And they have the same mission, but the peaks and troughs of development are different.

**(More)**

# LORBER

f i l m s

THE SUN

– Director's Comments –

**(Continued)**

On the face of it, there is little difference between the worship for the Emperor of Japan or, for example, that of General Stalin. Exaltation of the institution of power entered deeply the consciousness of human society long ago, and it is difficult to imagine what needs to be done today to convince people that power is not given by God. The Japanese represent a different human world, and are different from both European and Asian worlds. This total separation gives birth to unique examples of delicacy and grace as well as hardheartedness.

- 4 -

Hirohito added one more color to the picture of the world that we are trying to portray and create. This is a new side of a human character that is impossible to fully comprehend. The character is the element. The character is an inexhaustible artistic object.

I don't make films about dictators. I make films about those who are more outstanding than the rest. They appeared to be in possession of ultimate power, but human characteristics such as weakness and passion effect their deeds more than the status and circumstances. Human qualities are higher than any historical situation: higher and stronger.

- From an interview with Alexander Sokurov -

# LORBER

f i l m s

THE SUN

**ALEXANDER SOKUROV**  
– DIRECTOR and DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY –

Alexander Sokurov was born on June 14, 1951 in Russia, Irkutsk District.

## **Feature films:**

1978-87 – The Lonely Voice of Man  
1980 – The Degraded  
1983-87 – Painful Indifference  
1987 – Empire  
1988 – Days of Eclipse  
1989 – Save and Protect  
1990 – The Second Circle  
1992 – Stone  
1993 – Whispering Pages  
1997 – Mother and Son  
1999 – Moloch  
2001 – Taurus  
2002 – Russian Ark  
2003 – Father and Son  
2005 – The Sun

## **Documentaries:**

1978-88 – Maria (Peasant Elegy)  
1979-89 – Sonata for Hitler  
1981-86 – Sonata for Viola. Dmitri Shostakovitch  
1982-87 – And Nothing More  
1984-87 – Evening Sacrifice  
1985-86 – Patience. Labour  
1986 – Elegy  
1986 – Moscow Elegy  
1989 – Petersburg Elegy  
1989 – Soviet Elegy  
1990 – To The Events In Transcaucasia.  
Newsreel No. 5, Special Issue  
1990 – A Simple Elegy  
1990 – A Retrospection of Leningrad (1957-1990)  
1991 – An Example of Intonation

# LORBER

f i l m s

THE SUN

**ALEXANDER SOKUROV**

**– DIRECTOR and DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY –**

**Documentaries:**

**– Continued –**

1992 – Elegy from Russia

1995 – Spiritual Voices (in 5 parts)

1996 – Oriental Elegy

1996 – Hubert Robert. A Fortunate Life

1997 – A Humble Life

1997 – The St. Petersburg Diary.

Inauguration of a monument to Dostoevsky

1998 – The St. Petersburg Diary. Kosintsev's Flat

1998 – Confession (in 5 parts)

1998 – The Dialogues with Solzhenitsyn

1999 – dolce...

2001 – Elegy of a Voyage

2004 – The St. Petersburg Diary. Mozart. Requiem