

THE SKY

by **TAKIS KANELOPOULOS**

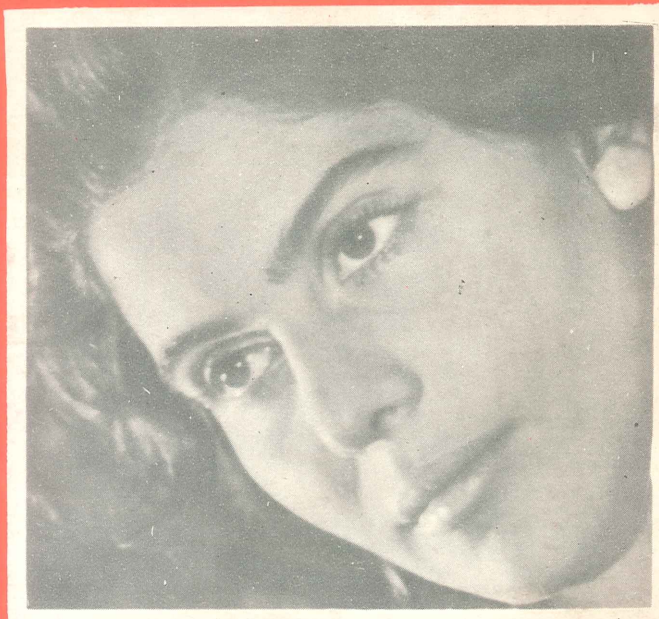
Produced by **VASSILIA ZERVOU DRACAKIS**

Screen Play by **GEORGE KITSOPOULOS and
TAKIS KANELOPOULOS**

Photography by **GREGORY DANALIS and
GIOVANNI VARIANO**

Music by **ARGYRIS COUNADIS**

Directed by **TAKIS KANELLOPOULOS**



Actors taking part :

**EMILIA PITTA
TAKIS EMMANOUIL
NICOS TSAHIRIDIS
FEDON GEORGITSIS
CHRISTOFER MALAMAS
STAVROS TORNES
TAKIS FILINAS
LAZOS TERZAS
GEORGE FOURNIADIS
ELIAS BOUYOUCAS
NIKI TRIANTAFILIDOU
LAMBRINI DIMITRIADOY
NICIFORE ARGIRIADIS
COSTAS KARAGEORGIS
and
HELEN ZAFIRIOU**

Distribution :

Throughout the world :

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SYNOPSIS

The «Sky» shows us the three stages through which Greece passed during the heroic but tragic year of 1940. The first stage is the peaceful atmosphere of early dawn, then come the early victories which were like the brilliant but scorching noon day sun, and finally the gloom and darkness of defeat and retreat.

The opening scenes show the hard but serene life in a Greek village near the border. Five soldiers and a sergeant are stationed there. One of the soldiers, the romantic Stratos, is in love with a village girl, and he watches her everyday as she goes to wash the clothes in the river. His sergeant lets him go there. A bond has developed between the men at the border post, they all come from villages, and they share in each other's joys and sorrows.

The scenes from the life of the villagers and soldiers are interwoven, and the screen is filled with exquisite images.

We see Yangos, a village lad, working hard in the fields with his mother and young sister. At noon they sit together to lunch on bread. The contentment on their faces shows the simple pleasure of eating their hard earned bread. Later, when they finish their work, Yangos is washing himself and his young sister teases him. He chases her, catches her, lifts her off the ground and brings her to the mother who is resting on the ground. The chase has exhausted their last drop of energy, and as they sit on the ground we feel their peace of mind and their indivisibility from the soil on which they toil so hard.

Yangos is in love with Anthoula. Their love is typical of the way they have been brought up: it is tender and pure. We see them exchange their first kiss, and the beauty of their innocence is magnificently portrayed in this scene.

We also see Stratos, the lonely soldier, who has gone to see his love washing the clothes in the river. He calls to her across the river asking her name, she does not reply. He shouts to her that he has a sister of her age and that she has the same complex-

ion as his mother, he tells her that he wants to go to her parents and ask her hand in marriage. The village girls' modesty and upbringing make her remain silent, although she finds him attractive.

The two girls tell each other about their loves; they giggle into each other's ears; we do not hear what they say, but the message reaches us.

All this is interrupted by the war and the Italian invasion of Greece. The soldiers and the young men of the village march off. What happened is now part of history, and the fact that the small and ill equipped Greek army drove back and chased an army superior in numbers and equipment, was presented to an outstounded world. This second part of the film does not present the fanfare of war, but rather its misery and despair, and its effect on man and his soul.

It presents stories of some of the men who fought there. It is based on authentic recountings of events.

The Greek soldiers have been marching for seven hours, they are all tired, but one is especially so and he lags behind. The sergeant ticks him off. The soldier shows him his boots which are in a terrible state. The sergeant tells him to keep going and to get a better pair once they attacked and taken the hill.

We see what the sergeant meant when the soldier tearfully takes his better pair, on the hill, from the feet of the dead sergeant. The boots are the sergeant's last bequest to his country, in order to enable another soldier to continue fighting.

In the middle of their exhilaration and their superb victories against the Italians, the Germans intervene. Masses of armoured divisions and the Luftwaffe poured in, and the front which has been extended to beyond the Greek frontiers is broken. The Government, seeing, that further resistance would be futile, comes to terms and the army is ordered to retreat and disperse. The soldiers are not aware of this. All they know is that, in spite of their superhuman efforts, their great sacrifices and victories, they now have to retreat

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and leave their country to be occupied.

Stratos, who was in the signal corps, found out the meaning of their retreat before the others, and his sensitive soul is deeply affected. He refuses to go back, and we see him brooding on the road. Other soldiers find him, and tell him to join them. He tells them he does not want to go back. He is forcibly taken with them while he plaintively shouts «why should we retreat, we have been winning». He continues brooding, and is deeply hurt by the idea that all their sacrifices were of no avail, and that his country would soon be under foreign yoke; this finally drives him to suicide.

Other parts of the front are not aware of the terms, and we see Yangos, till in battle. There is a short lull, and Yangos tells his companion that he is extremely thirsty and must have a drink from the nearby spring. His friend tells him not to be foolish and expose himself thus. Yangos, who has been brought up to believe that even a snake's life is respected while it is drinking water, naively replies «If you saw someone thirsty and drinking at a spring, would you shoot him?». He goes to the spring, satisfies his thirst, and is shot down.

The retreat is also very poignant. The soldiers passing desolate villages, where the old folks dash and hopefully but futilely ask news about their own boys, and then offer food and shelter to the soldiers.

Before dispersing, a group of soldiers sit down for a last smoke, sharing one cigarette. Their silence, which is the result of all the great moments they have been through, gives them all a sense of Homeric peace. They disperse to the sound of a last cry «Poor beloved country».

This is a rough sketch of the film. May be describing it in writing does not do justice to its visual beauty and its technical excellence. It is the work of a young and very talented director. He has already made a name for himself in our country.



