

U.S.S.A. 1985



My first trip to Moscow was with my father in 1961 when he discovered that part of his family was still alive and living there. He left Russia around 1918, right after the Revolution. Because of anti-Semitism his mother told him that if he ever wanted to get anywhere he'd better get the hell out of Russia. There weren't many possibilities for a Jew and he was about to be drafted for 7 years into the Ukrainian Army.

My father was born in Belarus but the situation was so bad there that his family moved to the Ukraine – only to find that the Ukraine was far worse. He left for Istanbul – Constantinople at the time – and he stayed there for a year and then moved to Prague making his way to the West after that. During the Stalinist period, the family in Russia always denied that they had any relatives living abroad; they risked being jailed or even killed otherwise.

When Khrushchev came to power my father found out that he still had a brother and sister living in Moscow. For about 15 years, except for the Prague Spring in 1968, we went yearly.

Because a generation of old Soviet leaders were dying out, it seemed like each time one would become the head of state, he would rule for two months and then die. There was an endless procession of funerals.

But what struck me was how similar in certain respects the two blocs, the US and Soviet Russia, were. I tried to find things that connected them and after the funeral marches in Moscow, I found these marching Cub Scouts in New York.

I added footage shot in Rotterdam and Paris. I shot all the time continuing my film diary and edited in a collage style.

Eat 1988



I think I chose eating as a theme because I was frustrated with a film I made a year earlier, *TROIS ÉTOILES*, on gourmet dining. I continued collecting observations of human and animal's feeding habits. Gradually, I realized that animals ate more elegantly than humans; the comic potential of this banal but essential act became evident to me.

The scene in the beginning of *Eat* where there are a lot of people eating was in Vaison-la-Romaine, during a gathering of choruses from all over France. These chorus singers rehearsed together and then stopped to have lunch. As is obvious

in the film, it was an extremely hot summer. But that didn't prevent them from having their typical French lunch with lots of mayonnaise. I was particularly fascinated by one man's concentration on his eating; I was standing right next to him but he didn't even notice me filming. I don't move much at all. I just place myself somewhere and observe. Often people don't think that they are worthy of anybody else's attention so it just doesn't occur to them that I could be filming them. I went to the zoo in the Bois de Vincennes in Paris to shoot the animals.