

Esfir Dener Next To Stalin Monument In Kislovodsk



This is me, next to the Stalin monument in the city park in Kislovodsk. The photo was taken in 1957 during my first trip after exile. It was after the 20th Congress and the denouncement of Stalin. I knew then that this monument was to be dismantled soon and wanted to have my photo taken next time near the empty pedestal. I did so in 1966 but the second photo is unfortunately lost. In 1956, at the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev denounced Stalin and this had a direct impact on me - in 1956 I was released from exile. I was happy that they released me and I obtained a legal passport! My God! That's still the most precious thing I have in my life. It was summer. I had a piece of a red polka-dot staple fabric. I designed a dress and took the fabric to a dressmaker to make a dress for me. I was walking in the street wearing this dress, when I saw the chief of the

camp. He said, 'You look like a strawberry. Look, let's go to the cinema. No guns or dogs! Don't be unforgiving. Whatever there was there was.' I said, 'Remember this, man. I shall never have anything to do with somebody who convoyed me at gun-point'. And I went on. I must say people treated me very well in the Ural. There was no anti-Semitism. I was a labor and salary engineer in repair shops in Nyrob and then I moved to Zlatoust in Cheliabinsk region.