

(Dict. by AH)

HISS PERSONAL 2395

December 10, 1948

Memorandum of Conversation with
Hetty Massing

The steps leading up to this conversation are described in today's memorandum on my appearance before the Grand Jury. Incidentally, it may be added that in the course of the afternoon, Mr. Donegan referred to the interview with Miss Massing and said that it represented something that was still in the investigating stage and that he had told Mr. Kelly he had no objection to my talking to Miss Massing if I was willing and if my lawyer was willing.

As we reached the door of the room, Mr. Kelly asked us to wait outside for a moment and he went in and held a whispered conversation with someone in the corner (obviously with Miss Massing as she was sitting in this corner when we came in). In a couple of minutes we were asked to come in. Those present were a Mr. Ward, apparently another F.B.I. agent, Mr. Kelly, Miss Massing, Mr. McLan and myself.

Miss Massing rose as we came in and when we gestured for her to be seated, said that she wanted to stand but for us to please sit, as we did. She is a rather tall woman and was dressed in black as yesterday. She has rather light brown hair, wears glasses, and has a long, sharp nose.

Miss Massing said that she did not like my just coming in and sitting and looking at her the day before, that she wanted to help me and that the meeting was being held at her special request. She hoped I knew that. She said she did not want to hurt me but only to help me.

Miss Massing then asked if I did not remember having dinner with her at Noel Field's. I said that I did not. She said that that was the only occasion on which she had seen me. In answer to a question by me, she said that she thought no one else was present except Noel and Herta (Mrs. Field). I asked if Mrs. Hiss was present and she said no, Mrs. Hiss had been expected to come but at the last minute could not come. She also said that her talk with me had taken place privately in another room. I asked if she meant to say that we had stepped aside from the others. She said no, but did not elaborate or contradict her statement that we had stepped into another room.

She said that she had known Noel very well and that she had tried to enlist his interest in world socialism. He had told her that I was his closest friend. (This is not possible as Mr. Duggan was a much closer friend and has remained so. I have no doubt Mr. Field had many other far closer friends. I mention Mr. Duggan especially because he lived in the same apartment house with Mr. Field.) She said that Noel Field also told her that he was deeply under my influence and that I had helped him to accept world socialism. He said that he was inclined to work with me. Without expressly saying so, she apparently was trying to give the impression that she was asking

Noel Field to do Communist work with her. At one point she used the phrase "my apparatus". Mr. McLean asked her if the conversation she was referring to was one in which she and I had contended for Mr. Field. She said no, it was not that way at all and that words like "apparatus" were not mentioned. It was a social evening. She was sure we had talked about anti-fascism and world socialism because that was then her work. She said that she was then a member of the German Communist party. She also said that she had broken with the Communist Party in 1937. I understood her to say that this was after having been in Russia for a few months to be purged.

She seemed unable to separate the alleged general conversation from the particular conversation she was supposed to have had aside with me.

She said that she remembered me very well, that she had been very much impressed with me. She may even have said that she was influenced by me. She said the meeting was an important occasion in her life although it was the only time she ever saw me. She said that when she later saw me rise to importance with President Roosevelt and at San Francisco, she was glad and thought that I must share her views. Apparently she was trying to say that this was the reason she wanted to help me and wanted to talk to me. I think she said that she had never told her story until the last couple of days and had then done so because she thought she could help me.

I asked her when the meeting was supposed to have taken place and she said 1934 or 1935.

When I said that I had no recollection whatever of

meeting her or of any conversation remotely like that she was describing, she turned to Mr. Ward, calling him I think by his first name, and said something to the effect, "Shall I go on?" This was in the middle of the conversation.

Near the conclusion of the conversation, when I said that I had no recollection whatever of her or of the event she was describing, she said, "Then it must have been another Alger Hiss." I said that might be one possible explanation.

Shortly after that Mr. McLean and I left.

Mr. Kelly said to us, "You can see now why I wanted you to talk to her." He said he knew very little about her, that others in the F.B.I. had been getting her story.

Alger Hiss