

July 25th 1949.

Interview with Mrs. Noel Field

Although I had not mentioned the purpose of my visit when I announced it by phone, I was received very kindly by Mrs. Field. I was shown into a medium sized reasonably comfortable bedroom-sittingroom. Many framed photographs were on the wall and on the tables.

I opened the conversation by asking Mrs. Field whether she had followed the case of Alger Hiss. She replied that she certainly had and that her source of information was the New York Times. When I referred to the fact that her and her husband's name had been mentioned she told me that she had read in the New York Times about the repeated attempts of the prosecutor to introduce Mrs. Massing as witness and that to her surprise she had seen also her and her husband's name mentioned in this connection. All which she could find out from the papers had however been that there was talk of a certain conversation - details of which were not mentioned - which allegedly had taken place in her and her husband's apartment.

I then told her that according to the story of Mrs. Massing she had met Alger Hiss during the dinner in her apartment and that a conversation about the mutual co-operation in the socialist work had taken place.

Mrs. Field immediately denied that Mrs. Massing and Alger Hiss had ever met in her apartment. She confirmed that both had been many times her and her husband's guests, but declared that they never were invited together. She said that she could remember this distinctly because her apartment was very small and therefore they had never large parties. They necessarily seldom included more than four to six persons.

She continued that even if her recollection should be wrong in this point she was definitely sure that no such conversation as I had mentioned had ever taken place in her apartment. The small size of it would have excluded a private talk between Mrs. Massing and Alger Hiss. There were no private corners in the livingroom and nobody could carry on a conversation unnoticed by the others. She said that she doubtless would remember a conversation on such an unusual subject if it had ever taken place in her apartment.

I then gave her details on this conversation on the basis of Mr. Mc Lean's memorandum (without handing it to her of course). Mrs. Field shook her head several times during my explanations and denied violently, that such a conversation had ever taken place in her home and

confirmed again that Alger Hiss and Mrs. Massing had never met there.

I told her that it would be very valuable to have also the opinion of her husband. She replied that her husband was at present in Prag and expected to be back in Geneva at the end of summer where he counted to stay for some time. She said that he doubtless would be very glad to see me and explain his own recollection. She herself planned to go to Prag within a few days and would tell him about my visit and ask him about his opinion. I then told her that we might have to have an affidavit from her and her husband later on and asked her where I could reach her. She replied that she had no definite plans for the next months, but counted on staying in Geneva with the exception of a few trips abroad as the one to Prag which she just mentioned. Mail would always reach her through her present address. Under those circumstances I asked her to give me a little handwritten statement confirming the main point. She agreed to prepare such a note for our next meeting.

She concluded by expressing her warm and sincere thanks that she was informed directly on the development and she assured me of her full co-operation.

She suggested to see me again in Zurich within a few days. She wanted to memorize the statement of Mrs. Messing. She had asked me previously to show her the memorandum I had from America and give her a copy of it. I told her that this was not feasible.

She at times looked rather worried during the conversations and once expressed also something to the effect that such a "publicity" would make life very difficult for her and her husband in America.

Before I left I asked her whether she could think of any motive for Mrs. Messing's statement. She gave this point some thought and then replied that at present she could think of none but she would think it over and may-be forward some possible explanation on our next meeting.

With renewed expression of thankfulness from her part the interview was closed. It had lasted about 35 minutes.

The meeting took place at the apartment of the two sisters Doess, 27, Rue Voltaire, Geneva. I have had considerable trouble locating Mrs. Field. At 21, Rue des Contamines they had left without a forwarding address. In the phone book I found the following address: Unitarian Service Committee, 37, q. Wilson. When I called up there, I was told that Mr. and Mrs. Field had left the service for quite some time and that

their present address was unknown. The American Consulate had the address of 12, Rue du Vieux Cottage, but was informed that also this address had been changed. After some pressure and pointing out the fact that it was extremely important that I should see Mrs. Field, the girl in charge of registration finally told me that if it was something very important I could reach Mrs. Field through Miss Betty Doess at the above mentioned address of 27, Rue Voltaire, Geneva. Apparently Mrs. Field stays at present with the Doess sisters.

W. Staehelin

Geneva, Aug 27th, 1949

Dr. W. Staehelin
Bleicherweg 10
Zurich

Dear Dr. Staehelin,

Thank you very much for acquainting me with the report Hede Massing made on a conversation she claims to have had with Algee Hiss in our apartment. I cannot remember ever having invited Hede Massing and Algee Hiss together for dinner. I am sure this conversation never took place.

Herta K. Field