

Then I had a bright idea—not so bright in retrospect, considering all the publicity it was to bring me.

“I want to meet Hiss,” I said.

Noel promised to arrange a meeting as soon as possible. Some days later he notified me in New York that the arrangements were made. I would meet Alger Hiss at a dinner at the Fields’.

Fred was disturbed when I reported this new development. A dispute over the enlistment of a prospect, amounting to a “jurisdictional” squabble, was not to Fred’s liking. After some hesitation, however, he gave me permission. If we failed to get Field, after the long period of optimistic “progress reports” to headquarters, it would be a black eye for Fred, no less than for myself.

A week or so later I did meet Hiss. This meeting he has consistently denied ever took place.

I remember my meeting with Alger Hiss in almost every detail. It was terribly important in my life at the time. It was a meeting with a competitor of unknown quality and, frankly, I was scared. Fred had briefed me for the meeting. He was not happy about it, but it had been arranged and we had to go through with it. The gist of his advice was that I should not give the man the slightest indication of what I was doing. On the other hand, I was to impress him in such a way that there would be no doubt that it was I who was entitled to get Noel. A pretty big order.

It was in the fall of 1935 when I arrived at the Fields’, tense and anxious. There was a sense of anticipation on the part of the Fields; they seemed almost as much concerned about the meeting of Alger and myself as I was.

When he came in and we shook hands, I saw and liked the slender, highly intelligent-looking young man. More than