

to Sayre was to scan all incoming cables. The important ones he sent directly to Sayre; the less important he read himself, jotting down notes on the points of greatest interest so that he could later give Sayre an accurate oral report. Sometimes, Hiss testified, his original brief notation was so sketchy that, on reperusal, it didn't make much sense even to him, and so he would clarify it with a further notation before reporting to Sayre.

This version given by Hiss, unfortunately for the defense, could not be substantiated by anyone else. Sayre testified that he had never seen handwritten memos like the four produced at the trial and wasn't aware that Hiss made such notations. Miss Eunice A. Lincoln, a veteran State Department employee and secretary in the joint office shared by Hiss and Sayre, told the jury she had never seen such memos in all her long experience in the department. She agreed that Sayre and Hiss frequently lunched together, agreed that she was not present when Hiss reported privately to Sayre in Sayre's office. The result of this line of testimony is certainly negative, but just as certainly it is not conclusive. Hiss failed to obtain for himself important corroboration, and Sayre's and Miss Lincoln's testimony may have cast doubt on his explanation in the eyes of the jury. Still, Hiss's version was not disproved; the possibility remains that he might have kept such private memos for a quick, last-minute reference before reporting orally to Sayre. In the absence of definitive proof one way or the other, one is forced to rely on the memos themselves and on what logically may be deduced from them.

The internal evidence of the memos seems to support Hiss. On three of them, extremely cryptic notations in either blue crayon or blue pencil at the top are elaborated in pencil underneath. All of the memos had been neatly folded across in the middle, as might be the case if they had been shoved into a man's pocket.

If Chambers told the truth about these memos, one is stag-

gered by the monumental stupidity of the supposedly brilliant Alger Hiss. A man would have to be a near-idiot, one would think, to entrust to others handwritten notes that, if discovered, would be damning proof of treason. Of course, there is always the possibility that Hiss was so dedicated a Communist (even though there is no credible proof that he was) that he put blind trust in his confederates; but normally it would seem more logical to suppose that his personal memos might have been stolen by someone else and passed on to Chambers. Such a go-between would have had no concern about what might happen to Alger Hiss; his would not have been a deed of self-incrimination.

Logic suggests also a second consideration which Hiss stresses in his book. According to Chambers, the Hisses were working industriously on the old Woodstock, copying secret documents. Wouldn't they inevitably, in that case, have typed out more fully and intelligibly the brief office notes that Hiss had made? What would have been the sense of passing along a note headed by gibberish like "30 Potez-63, A lightest type, light b p" when a few strokes of the typewriter could have made all clear while at the same time eliminating the self-incriminating feature of handwriting? Why, indeed, wouldn't this have been done unless the notes were, as Hiss says they were, personal reminders to which he referred for his oral reports to Sayre?

A third significant point in connection with the memos is that none dealt with vital secrets. They do not seem to fall into the category specified by Chambers, messages of such import that Hiss had only fleeting access to them and so could not bring them out. One of the memos, for example, dealt with a sensational and widely publicized case of an American couple in Russia to whom American officials had first been denied access; the other three stressed neutrality and disarmament matters, subjects on which Sayre specialized and on which he was consulted frequently by superiors. Of these last