

DID SIRHAN SIRHAN

By SAMI HADAWI

From AL'ARAB, New Delhi

Legally, the evidence is yet to be presented. And, of course, only a trial by jury can finally establish what drove Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a twenty-four-year-old Jordanian-born alien resident in the U.S., to Los Angeles' crowded Ambassador Hotel on that tragic June night. Still, he had never concealed his hatred for Jews and for supporters of Israel. What had kept Sirhan's rage aflame for so long? Coincidentally, observers raised a challenging question: How great a part in the actuality of violence does the propaganda of violence play? Take a gently titled, bitterly chauvinistic article, "Reflections of a Palestinian," spread throughout the world by the inflammatory Arab League. By Sami Hadawi, Christian Arab author and director of the Institute of Palestine Studies in Beirut, these "reflections" seeped into far-flowing propaganda streams from Al'Arab, published by a branch of the League of Arab States and read by devout Arabs everywhere . . .

REMEMBER my home, its walls and fences and the trees and shrubs I planted and tended with my own hands, and I inquire: Who are those people who live in my house? What right have they to be there? Why will they not even pay rent?

In how many homes are my precious belongings now scattered after they have been plundered and robbed? Who is now eating off my dining-room table? Sitting on my sofas, couches and chairs? Sleeping in our beds? Playing our piano? Using our library and kitchen utensils? Who gathers the grapes from my vine? The fruits from my trees? Who plucks my flowers? Who feeds my canaries? Are the strangers' children using my children's swings and sandboxes?

My thoughts then carry me through the nineteen years of my exile, the countries I have been to, the homes in the United States I visited and the different peoples I met. With no hinge but the memories of my past, I have silently watched people take an interest in their homes, their occupations, their friends; I have seen their

people take an interest in their future. I have watched them celebrate Christmas with the same joy and happiness we used to celebrate ours in Jerusalem around the Christmas tree with our children and their cousins and friends gathered in bliss and rejoicing over the Birth of the Child who was like unto them.

In my reflections I often wished these carefree good people would, at least for once, put themselves in my place and imagine their feelings if they were to be deprived of country, home, property, family, relatives and friends. Would they rebel against such tyranny? Would they fight to regain what is rightfully theirs?

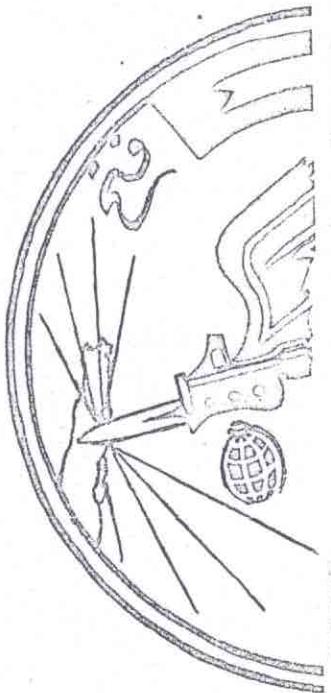
Or would they meekly—as the Palestinians are now being asked—"bless those who persecute them" and heed the threats of their persecutors to keep the peace and not disturb the development and exploitation by strangers of our homes and fields or else . . . ?

But then, do they expect people who are comfortable in life, have their families around them, their homes intact, to worry about the sufferings and deprivations of

others, even if only by thinking about them? Was this not the attitude of the so-called "world humanitarian"—Eleanor Roosevelt—when she passed through Jerusalem in 1951 on her way to the Israeli-occupied sector of the city?

Invited by an American lady resident of Jerusalem to visit a refugee camp and see for herself the pathetic plight of the Moslem and Christian inhabitants of the Holy Land who filled the countryside and surrounding caves, she replied with all candor and without the least compassion or emotion that she did not come to the Middle East to see the Arab refugees but her friends in Israel. Callously she added that there were refugees all over the world and the Palestine Arabs were no worse off. That was a sad moment for the United States whose "humanitarianism" the former first lady so badly represented!

Can their political career or material benefits be so important to them that they have become devoid of all human feeling or integrity, willing to sell their conscience for "thirty pieces of silver" as Judas sold Christ 2,000 years



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ago? Is it not a tragedy that people who have committed or helped to commit a crime should continue leading a normal life, while their victims suffer heavy deprivation, frustration and anguish? Will they escape punishment forever? Or will it some day come true that "the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children"?

God's mills grind slowly and the day will come when the Moslem and Christian inhabitants of the Holy Land will return to their homes and the nightmare of the twenty, thirty or even one hundred years will pass. Judging from the past history of the Holy Land, this is bound to happen.

The Zionist invasion is not the first. Romans, Greeks, the Crusaders and others have crossed the Mediterranean and come to the edge of our desert.

But always, after bearing patiently with them for a while, the desert has risen in protest and has pressed them back into the sea. The Arabian desert is bound to rebel again and the Zionist intruders will be cast into the sea whence they came and we shall have peace in the Holy Land.

My love has made my heart into a grenade

*Each moment is precious;
Each moment of peace drops through the hourglass
Into the sand.*

*Burning sand
Is an eternal harshness for my feet
Awaiting me, when I am strong enough to go
Into the years of fire
After the last tear is shed,
The last good-by is murmured
With all my feelings dead.*

*Then I am to become
A hand of steel grafted to a rifle,
A thing higher than the man I am
Through the will to die to serve man starving, mutilated.*

*I cannot deny, I am afraid
Of the ending of all tenderness,
The long night of volcanic war,
The land of ash and stone, stretching eternal before me,
But my love has made my heart into a grenade,
Steel that will explode with passion,
Giving life.*

*And if, from all the bomb-torn bones and flesh
The mists of dawn one day will rise
Or if, from my body lying beside the road to Jerusalem,
The sun will appear again over this land,
Then my life, a piece of worthless dust,
Will become a thing of value.
The price of freedom for my son,
A ransom for the dying and enchainied.*

*So, like an angel with a blazing sword,
I am called up to set the land alight,
To bring forth miracles of my anger,
To pour my blood in an endless fertile river.*

*Then, after the martyrs have been dismembered and rotted
And the screams and anguish of that violence have
been stilled,
Our breath of dying will stir the dead leaves into life,
Revive the warm and gentle wind of summer,
And there will be peace.*

By Faris Glubb

CRAZY THEORY...A VIENNESE VENTURE INTO IRONY

By OTTO FIELHAUER

Translated from ARBEITER-ZEITUNG, Vienna

"WHY can't we use a rifle with a telescopic sight again . . .?"

"It takes too much time for people to realize what has happened. We need a visible murder."

"But the clues we left behind in the King affair were convincing: murder weapon . . . fingerprints . . . car . . . a real gangster."

"People are beginning to suspect that this Earl Ray alias Starvo Galt disappeared long before King was shot . . . Maybe the clues were *too* good. No, this time we need a real live loner."

"And what if he talks?"

"Then he won't get the money. Besides, we'll explain to him what happened to poor Lee Harvey Oswald."

"But Ruby is no longer with us."

"It's easy for us to find somebody else for this job. Well, whom do you have in the way of a loner who's gone wrong?"

"I could have a fanatical Chinese who's lived in Vietnam. He'll

do it for fifty thousand dollars."

"That's out. After all, Kennedy is against the Vietnam war."

"It could be a South Vietnamese. They are capable of anything. But, look here, do you want a poor Latin American?"

"What's his motive?"

"Well, he hates Kennedy because he's so rich . . . all right, all right, not him. What about another homosexual Communist? No? Not a second time. And here . . . for sixty thousand dollars . . . an Arab."

"An Arab? That's good, very good! Nasser, Al Fatah. Terror! You can trust them to do anything. But what's his grievance against Kennedy?"

"Sixty thousand dollars. No, all joking aside: Kennedy came out so strongly for Israel. And the day after the primary in California is June 5th. Is something dawning on you?"

"Magnificent. But does he seriously believe that he will actually

see the sixty thousand dollars?"

"We promise him an advance . . . so that he has four or five hundred dollars in his pocket . . . A very good lawyer . . . a couple of jurymen. Besides, capital punishment is being abolished now, and in two or three years we drag him out . . . because he's crazy or something like that, a patriotic act—we'll figure out the details. What does the poor fellow have to lose, anyway?"

"But people will talk in spite of that. All three were the most prominent friends of the Negroes and the Reds . . . and if only such men are shot by nuts?"

"Nothing can be done about that."

"Well, for the sake of appearances, we could try to assassinate the others . . . Rusk, Goldwater or even Wallace himself."

"Are you crazy? Never. The way our boys shoot, they're capable of actually hitting the target in such a set-up."

Contradiction...the father of the accused speaks twice

BISHARA SIRHAN, 52, the father of the man detained as Senator Robert Kennedy's assassin, surprised another wave of TV and press reporters with an abrupt switch from his former stand and statements. The elder Sirhan declared that he was "sure the shooting was carried out entirely on his son's initiative and alone." (Three days earlier, in a statement to *The Jerusalem Post*, he said Sirhan Sirhan must have been put up to the job by somebody else.)

"Reports that other men or women were involved are baseless," he said. His son must have been motivated by his own feelings alone, he added. "It is Senator Kennedy who is to blame for what happened. It is his tongue which led to his assassination." The Senator had "insulted the Arabs enough," he went on.

When asked how the Senator had "insulted" the Arabs, Mr. Sirhan paused for a second, and then said: "Well, Mohammed Mehdi said he did." (Mehdi, the Secretary-General of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations, was reported to have said in New York that Sirhan "may have been inflamed" by Kennedy's TV statement June 1 that the United States should support Israel in the Middle East conflict.)

Reminded of his former rejection of any such motives, Sirhan told *The Post* that he has now changed his mind "following the study of reports on the situation." In reply to a question arising as to whether he had been contacted recently by someone who might have helped him change his mind, Mr. Sirhan said that a resident of the nearby town of el-Biri, "who has

just arrived from the States," put things straight for him. When asked who, he began fumbling through his pockets for his card, which did not seem to be there.

He understood "through the el-Biri emissary" that his son would not be left alone at the trial. He added that he had now decided to go to the States before June 28, the date set by a Los Angeles court for the plea. In an attempt to change the picture given June 6 of his son as "a quiet, gentle and humble type," Mr. Sirhan last week told stories indicating that he had suffered several traumatic experiences during the 1948 war and that these had left permanent scars on his character. (Sirhan Sirhan was less than three years old during the fighting in Jerusalem.)

Safadi, THE JERUSALEM POST, Jerusalem