

WHILE SIRHAN, WHO IS HANGED

# Book 3-5-64 Sirhan Blasts Zionists in Court Tirade

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Bursting out in a passionate torrent of words, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan today called himself a man without a country, full of bitterness for "the goddamn Zionists" in America.

The admitted assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy could hardly contain himself on the witness stand as he blurted out the dark emotions that drove him to the killing.

The 24-year-old Palestinian immigrant made plain that he considered his emotions eminently reasonable. "I always felt that I had no country, no place I could call my own," Sirhan testified in a nonstop oration at his murder trial here. "I was sick and tired of being a foreigner.

"I wanted a place of my own where the people spoke my own language, where they ate my own food, where they shared my own politics, where I could have something I could identify with as a Palestinian and as an Arab," Sirhan declared, looking at chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper.

"I wanted my own country, my own city, my own home, my own land, my own everything, sir."

The frail defendant began his second day on the witness stand slowly, with Cooper producing only short, spare responses at first.

Gradually Sirhan opened up, first about the mystic "exercises" he used to conduct in his room.

See SIRHAN, A5, Col. 1

## SIRHAN: From A

He reached a crescendo when Cooper asked him to give his thoughts on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

### Bitter About War

He was particularly bitter about the six-day war in June, 1967, that ended with a lightning victory by the Israelis.

Sirhan recalled reading a

treatise in a Pasadena book store that he said recounted how "Zionists in America were influential" in getting U.S. foreign policy to favor Israel in the Middle East.

"It affected me very deeply," he told Cooper bitterly. "Where is the justice involved, sir? Where is the love of fighting for the underdog? Israel is not the underdog in the Middle East, sir. The Palestinians are. That burned the hell out of me."

The celebrated photograph of Israeli soldiers standing jubilantly at the banks of the Suez Canal, Sirhan went on, "broke me up."

"Why?" Cooper asked. "Why?" Sirhan shot back indignantly. "Because they were victorious. They were the winners. They could tell Nasser what to do."

"At the time, sir," Sirhan went on, "if I had seen those guys (the soldiers) in person, I would have killed them."

Seething by now, the defendant said he recalled, too, reading somewhere that Jewish Americans had raised \$370 million to send to Israel to help its economy in the wake of the 1967 fighting.

"That burned the hell out of me again, sir," he said. "Why? Here President Johnson was trying to bring back all these military groups back from Europe and Germany... trying to keep the money here at home... limiting tourist spending (abroad)."

Meanwhile, he said hotly, "These goddamn Zionists, they pick up \$370 million in cold cash and sent it out the back door, tax deductible, to Israel."

Sirhan took it all as a personal affront.

### Looked for Work

"What gives?" he demanded. "Here I was unemployed. I didn't have a damn job. I was looking for work, sir. And here is all that money going out of the country."

Rioting in the ghettos of American cities, he contended, also made the outflow of dollars offensive to him. But it was a thought he dropped only in passing. The Arab-Israeli conflict, and America's stance toward it, plainly preoccupied him.

Sirhan said he read everything he could about it, even the B'nai B'rith Messenger.

"I figured, sir," he told Cooper, "that the best way to know what the Zionists are

up to is to read what they say."

But primarily, he read the Arab side, especially the publications put out by the Arab Information Center, which is supported by the Arab League nations.

"Anything they put out, sir, if I could get my hands on it, I would read it."

His readings, he testified, also ran to the occult.

Sirhan said he used to conduct mystical experiments in the privacy of his bedroom,

staring at candle flames and putting his hand in pans of hot water to try out occultist claims of the primacy of mind over matter.

One book on "Cyclomancy... nothing but white magic," he said eagerly, "gave some elementary exercises. One of them was to put your hand in a pan of hot water and think cool."

"I know this sounds weird, unbelievable. But that boiling water on my hand was cool when I put it in."