

World Expects More of Jews

New York — (RNS) — The world expects Jews to higher moral standards than Arabs and other peoples, Magr. John M. Oesterreicher, head of the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J., said in an interview reacting to criticism of Israel's raid on the Beirut International Airport.

Long centuries of history have conditioned people, including many Jews in the past, to "expect the Jew to be passive, not to fight back or defend his rights," Magr. Oesterreicher said.

Israel's raid on the Beirut airport, conducted without bloodshed but involving the destruction of 13 civilian airplanes, can be considered an act of self-defense rather than of retaliation, Magr. Oesterreicher said.

"There are those who maintain that Israel's raid on airplanes at the Beirut airport in Beirut is much worse than the attack of Arab terrorists on the El Al plane at Athens. I do not think that is so.

"A man who takes this attitude seems to be guided by quantity rather than quality — 13 airplanes destroyed as against one passenger killed.

"But if the accent is put on where it belongs — airplanes as against human life — then it seems clear to me that the wanton attack on an innocent passenger is evil while the attack on airplanes — which are, after all, things — was not, since the attack was carried out so methodically that no human life was taken.

"I cannot denounce the action from a moral point of view. I do not consider it so much a reprisal as an act of self-defense. I think the Israeli government, by these so-called 'reprisals,' wishes to serve notice on Arab governments supporting terror-

ist organizations in one way or another that they do this at their own risk.

The only way to achieve peace in the Middle East, Magr. Oesterreicher said, is for the great powers to "demand that the terrorist attacks be stopped completely and that the Arab and Israeli governments start

negotiations toward a settlement of all pertinent questions." He added that "an imposed solution" would do no good because it would not last.

"Only if all the governments concerned sit down together and agree on the future," he said, "can prosperity and peace come to the Middle East."

3 Egyptian Churches Plead for Settlement

NEW YORK — (NC) — Three Christian leaders of Egypt have called upon "fellow Christians" of the United States to urge the U.S. government "to press the United Nations with the awful seriousness" of the Middle East situation and "make a great effort to arrange a settlement based on justice."

In a letter to Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, leaders of the Catholic Coptic rite, Coptic Orthodox, and Coptic Evangelical Churches in Egypt voiced the fear of imminent war again in the Middle East.

The letter cited as "even worse than the continuing threat of violence" in the Middle East the "deepening sense of injustice and the growing conviction that there is no solution outside war." It recalled the hardships of refugees, declaring that another generation of Arab children is being insufficiently fed and sheltered.

"We have seen hundreds of thousands of innocent people," the letter

said, "the great majority of them women, children and youngsters, languishing in our crowded refugee camps, displaced from lands and homes to which they long to return."

The letter was signed by the Catholic Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, Stephanos Cardinal Sidarous; the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, Kyrillos VI, and the Rev. Ibrahim Said, head of the Coptic Evangelical Churches.

Pope Deplores Israeli Raid on Beirut Airport

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope Paul VI sent a telegram to Lebanese President Charles Helou deploring the Israeli destruction of commercial aircraft at the Beirut airport.

"We wish to express to Your Excellency the expression of our sorrow for the grave happenings at Beirut. We strongly deplore acts of violence, from whatever source they come, which cannot but aggravate a situation which is already tense.

"Formulating good wishes that Lebanon, faithful to its noble traditions, may not be led down the road to violence which would render impossible the peaceful solution of the existing frictions, we exhort all men of good will to carry on without failing with their efforts for which we assure our moral support. With these feelings and invoking upon you the protection of God we send to you together with the beloved Lebanese people our apostolic benediction."

The Vatican City daily, L'Osservatore Romano, also published a commentary on the Israeli attack, saying: "Near the vigil of the Day of Peace (Jan. 1) we must take note with consternation of the events which took place at Beirut."

Biafra Toll: 2 Million Dead

By John R. Sullivan (NC News Service)

A United Nations agency has revealed its grim estimate of the cost of the 18-month-old civil war in West Africa.

The United Nations Children's Fund in a year-end statement said that more than two million people have died of starvation in Biafra and Nigeria, and called it "one of the most appalling tragedies of our times."

Meanwhile the government-owned Daily Sketch said informed sources revealed that the federal government is about to launch a major drive to end the war.

Lagos sources reported to NC News Service that the war, which at first seemed to unify the nation,

seems to be splitting it once again, and pressure is now on Gen. Yakubu Gowon, the federal chief of state, to bring it to a quick end.

Meanwhile, Biafran leader Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu proposed a limited truce, which he suggested could lead to negotiations to end the war. At the very least, he said, it would permit the delivery of massive relief supplies to relieve the suffering of Biafra's people.

Outside Africa, religious relief agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross prepared for the delivery of eight military cargo planes sold to them by the U.S. government. The planes, they said, will enable them to double their relief effort without increasing traffic at the already-busy Ull airstrip in Biafra.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

"I propose to retire on Aug. 24, 1970 when I'll be 75 years old, 50 years a priest, 30 years a bishop and 25 years archbishop of Boston," said Richard Cardinal Cushing, on a radio talk show. Two months ago, the cardinal said he was going to retire "immediately" because of criticism he received for defending Jacqueline Kennedy's marriage to Aristotle Onassis.

William F. Tonne, formerly a resident consultant for a New York City public relations firm, has been appointed executive director of the National Newman Foundation. And in another appointment of a lay person, William J. Wholean has been named executive director of the new Connecticut Catholic Conference formed by the diocese of Hartford, Bridgeport and Norwich to represent them on a statewide basis in legislation, housing, education and social action.

Still on the lay front, the president of the American Baptist Convention, Dr. Calbert G. Rutanbar, believes laymen must have their heads "knocked together" to see that the church is in trouble in the U.S. He said most laymen don't want to understand the Gospel and that the average pastor is "way ahead of the average layman in Christian experience and knowledgeability."



Trygve Lie Dies

Trygve Lie, 72, the first Secretary General of the United Nations, died Dec. 30 in Oslo, Norway, after a long illness. He had led the U.N. from its founding in 1945 until 1952. For supporting U.N. action in Korea in the early 1950s, he earned the wrath of the Soviet Union and his hope to see Communist China in the U.N. displaced the U.S. He resigned in 1952 so that the U.N. might name someone acceptable to the conflicting parties. (RNS)



Space Theologian

Father Clifford Stevens, formerly an Air Force chaplain and executive editor of The Priest magazine, believes that the opening up of outer space means unimaginable new challenges for both chaplains and theologians. A friend of several astronauts, the priest has traveled at twice the speed of sound, a fact commemorated by the pin on his lapel which shows a jet surmounting the figure 2. (RNS)

Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, church historian and mission leader, was killed when struck by a car the day after Christmas in Oregon City, Ore. He was 84. In two papal actions, Bishop Costanzo Ricci, has been named apostolic administrator of Senigallia, Italy, and the resignation of Archbishop Thomas A. Clavel Mendez, 57, of Panama City has been accepted for reasons of health. Robert Mills Donahue, 53, has resigned as director of the U.S. Bishops' Office of Public Information.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "The space flight (Apollo 8) will remind man of the staggering proportions of the universe in comparison with our tiny size. It will encourage him to consider earthly life in more exact and communal terms as well as awakening in him the sense of mystery involved in human life and destiny." — Pope Paul at his Sunday audience, Dec. 29.

Atheist Protests

Apollo 8 Prayers

Houston, Tex. — (RNS) — Mrs. Madelyn Murray O'Hair has registered a complaint with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration because the Apollo 8 astronauts read portions of the Bible while circling the moon.

The professed atheist whose suit led to the Supreme Court decision barring school prayer said her letter to the Manned Spacecraft Center was the start of a nationwide mail campaign.

"I think that they (the astronauts) were not only ill-advised but that it was a tragic situation, on a scientific venture, that something of this nature should have been brought in."

Mrs. O'Hair referred to the reading of the story of Creation from the Book of Genesis by the astronauts. Millions in the U.S. heard their "Christmas message" as the Apollo 8 capsule traveled 235,000 miles out in space.

U. S. Shows Way

In Belief of God

Princeton, N.J. — (NC) — The percentage of Americans who hold fundamental Christian beliefs far exceeds the percentage in 11 other Christian nations, according to a recent Gallup survey.

In the U.S. 98% say they believe in God; 73% in life after death; 65% in hell, and 60% in the devil. The only nation which comes close or exceeds these figures is Greece, in which 96% believe in God; 57% in life after death; 62% in hell, and 67% in the devil.

The Gallup survey was taken in 12 nations from July to November, 1968.

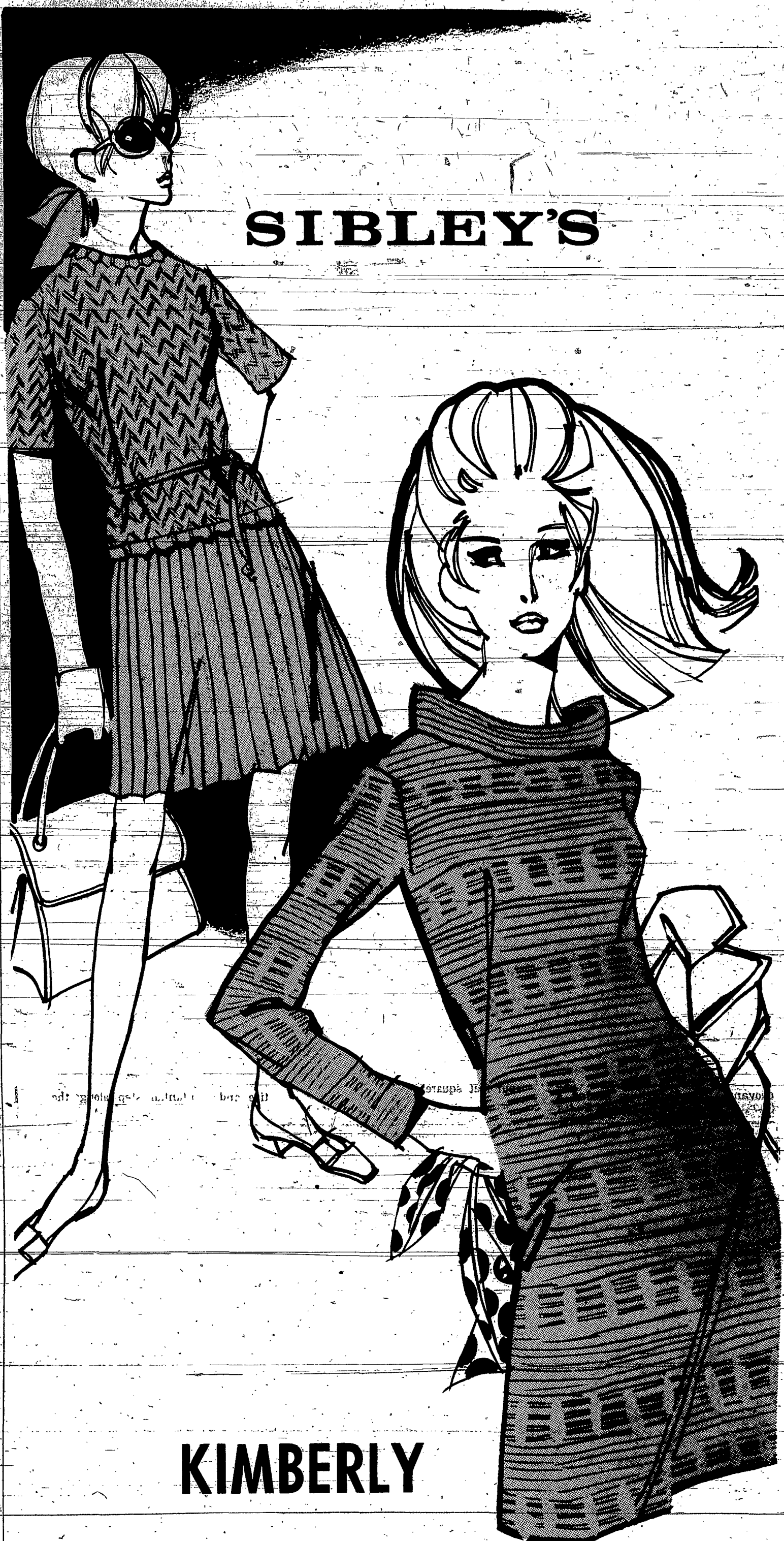
According to the survey, Americans have been fairly constant in their beliefs, while a drastic change has taken place in many European nations. In the United States, for example, 68% believe in life after death in 1948, compared with 73% in 1968.

In France, however, the percentage dropped from 58 to 35%; in the Netherlands from 68 to 50%; in Norway from 71 to 54% and in Britain from 49 to 38% in those two decades.

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Kimberly of Dacron® polyester fibre. At left

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