

Ethiopia (Falashas)
7/15/83

NEWS COMMITTEE

FROM THE



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, July 18...The American Jewish Committee has urged the Reagan Administration to restore to its proposed 1984 budget funds to help alleviate the growing food crisis in Ethiopia.

AJC President Howard I. Friedman, in a letter delivered over the week-end to Secretary of State George P. Shultz, expressed concern that the PL-480 Title II Program in Ethiopia had been eliminated from next year's budget, and called on the government to reinstate it "at present funding levels."

He also recommended that the Administration "give full and favorable attention to the emergency requests from the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization" in regard to the Ethiopian situation.

In making his requests, Mr. Friedman referred to "the humanitarian tradition of our country." He also pointed out that the American Jewish Committee, the nation's oldest human relations organization, had a special concern for the estimated 23,000 B'nai Israel, the Falasha Jews in Ethiopia. Most of these people live in the Gondar and Tigray provinces, the area most severely affected by the current drought.

The full text of Mr. Friedman's letter follows:

The growing food crisis in Ethiopia resulting from the severe drought there now raises the prospect of starvation for hundreds of thousands of people in that country.

The American Jewish Committee is well aware that the Administration has been generous in its initial response to emergency requests for food and health supplies, in keeping with the humanitarian tradition of our country. The AJC -- as this nation's oldest human relations organization involved in refugee and humanitarian issues since its founding in 1906 and with its particular concerns for the estimated 23,000 Jews in Ethiopia -- welcomes the approval some months ago of the assistance requests submitted to AID by various voluntary agencies.

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Given this initial Administration response to the emergency, the AJC was surprised and distressed to learn that the F Y 1984 budget eliminates the PL-480 Title II Program in Ethiopia which supplies such vital food supplies and necessary relief. Failure to reinstate this, we believe, will do damage both to the United States record of assistance and to the efforts being made to prevent potential starvation. We therefore strongly urge that it be put back into the budget a present funding levels.

May we recommend at the same time that the Administration give full and favorable attention, too, to the emergency requests from the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization in this connection.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews at home and abroad, and seeks improved human relations for all people everywhere.

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