

Ethiopia  
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# 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**

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17... The American Jewish Committee today announced here that it has contributed \$100,000 for the relief of the suffering of Ethiopian Jews and of thousands of other starving Africans.

Howard I. Friedman of Los Angeles, President of the AJC, made the announcement of the organization's contribution during a four-day visit to Israel that was highlighted by a meeting today with Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

In disclosing the AJC's philanthropic awards, Mr. Friedman reported the major portion was allocated to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. As a result of a recent agreement between the J.D.C. and the Ethiopian government, the Jewish relief agency carries the dual responsibility of providing relief and rehabilitation services for Ethiopian Jews as well as supervising feeding stations and medical facilities for Ethiopian non-Jews in Gondar Province.

Mr. Friedman, who is a prominent attorney, also stated that the American Jewish Committee has allocated substantial amounts to Catholic Relief Services and Church World Service, a Protestant relief agency. "The tragedy of thousands of Ethiopians and Africans starving and dying from famine and diseases" he said, "has deeply touched the conscience of the American people, as it has Israelis and many other countries. The plight of our Ethiopian Jewish brothers and sisters is uppermost in our minds, and our membership is responding wholeheartedly in solidarity with them. At the same time, both as Jews and as Americans we cannot remain indifferent to the plight of so many millions of Africans who are also created in God's sacred image. Therefore, our contributions to Catholic and Protestant relief agencies are symbolic signs of our human solidarity with all suffering peoples."

The American Jewish Committee has been in the forefront of raising consciousness and in mobilizing practical support for Ethiopian Jews and victims of the African famine. Earlier this month, the AJC sent one of its staff members, David Harris, deputy director of its International Relations Department, on a fact-finding mission with other Jewish representatives to Ethiopia.

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During the past month, AJC's International Relations director, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, joined with 300 American religious and relief agency leaders in appealing to President Reagan and the U.S. Congress to provide massive emergency relief through launching Operation African Airlift. Rabbi Tanenbaum also represented AJC on a Select Congressional Committee on Hunger drive to provide \$1 billion in long-term economic development and agricultural assistance to some 26 African countries struck by famine.

In his meetings with Prime Minister Peres and other Israeli officials, Mr. Friedman was accompanied by Dr. David Gordis, AJC executive vice-president; Dr. M. Bernard Resnikoff, director of AJC's Israel office; William Trosten, associate director, and Rabbi Tanenbaum.

While the content of their meetings remained private, Mr. Friedman indicated that the following areas were discussed with Prime Minister Peres and other Israeli officials: the economic situation; U.S.-Israeli relations; Israel-Arab relations; the European community and Israel; Soviet and Syrian Jewries; and Israel's internal religious and intergroup problems.

Dr. Gordis reported that the AJC mission was also examining ways to strengthen "AJC's presence and pragmatic role in Israel as a means of improving ties between Israel and American Jewry."

He also announced that an Institute of the AJC Board of Governors would take place in Israel from January 30 to February 10, 1985. "We are bringing our top AJC leaders from throughout the United States to this Institute next February," Dr. Gordis said, "in order to acquaint them with first-hand experiences in the domestic and foreign policy challenges facing Israel. We see ourselves as partners in collaboration with our Jewish brothers and sisters in helping build a secure, productive, tolerant, and pluralistic Jewish society."

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