

Canadian Association for Ethiopian Jews fonds [multiple media] – 1980-1993.



PART OF	Canadian Association for Ethiopian Jews fonds
LEVEL	Fonds
FONDS	125
MATERIAL FORMAT	multiple media
DATE	1980-1993
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	ca 97 cm of textual records 3 audiocassettes 1 poster
ADMIN HISTORY/BIO	<p>The Canadian Association for Ethiopian Jews was a non-profit organization established in 1980 for the sole purpose of assisting Ethiopian Jews. To this end, CAEJ (pronounced "cage") cooperated with other bodies such as the American Association for Ethiopian Jews. Initially, CAEJ worked with the Canadian Jewish Congress Sub Committee for Ethiopian Jewry, but the two severed ties early on. The divorce was driven by a difference in strategy: The CJC subcommittee preferred quiet diplomacy while CAEJ wanted to make noise. CAEJ was prepared to criticize Israel in the media, for example, for failing to do enough for Ethiopia's Jews—something that provoked disagreement within the Jewish community.</p> <p>Apart from advocating for Ethiopia's Jews, CAEJ's main work consisted of rescue and relief. Rescue took the form of a visa program, in which Jewish students in Ethiopia were issued visas so that they could attend Canadian universities; once out of Ethiopia, they were able to immigrate to Israel. Relief took the form of an Adopt-a-Family program, which delivered monthly stipends to Ethiopians in need. According to Cathy Himelfard, past president of CAEJ, at least five hundred individuals received stipends from the organization.</p> <p>In 1980, CAEJ established a Pacific chapter in Vancouver, which undertook education and rescue programs. CAEJ later opened chapters in Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Calgary. In 1984, CAEJ received a \$15,000 Wintario grant to produce a videotape on the black Jews of Ethiopia. Susan Fish, provincial minister of citizenship and culture, awarded CAEJ the grant. CAEJ was one of sixteen that were given that year.</p> <p>In 1986, the organization sent a five-person team to Ethiopia's Gondar province, the home of many of Ethiopia's Jews. The team included CAEJ's executive director, Susan Schechtman, and its assistant administrative director, Donna Finkelstein. The team visited five villages, bringing relief and conducting a fact-finding mission, the findings of which were disseminated in the press upon the team's return.</p> <p>In 1987, the CAEJ held a benefit concert at the EI Mocambo, a live music venue in Toronto, to aid the Jews stranded in Ethiopia.</p> <p>In 1990, 15,000 Jews moved from their villages in the northern regions of Ethiopia to Addis Ababa, under the impression that they would be able to emigrate without delay. With immigration to Israel greatly reduced, these Jews founded themselves living in terrible conditions, with reports of several hundred individuals, mostly children, dying of malnutrition and disease. In response to these developments, the CAEJ redirected its Adopt-a-Family funds to the mass relief. This involved sending doctors and medication as well as launching projects to provide clothing, food supplements, and more medical supplies.</p> <p>The association's final project, conducted after Operation Solomon, involved persuading two-hundred-and-fifty Jews in Sudan to return to Addis Ababa. Once there, they were flown to Israel.</p> <p>In 1992, after twelve years of operation, CAEJ shut down. Former president Jack Hope told the CJC, "We've fulfilled our mandate."</p>

SCOPE AND CONTENT	<p>The fonds consists of material documenting the Canadian Association for Ethiopian Jews. Included are letters, artifacts, meeting minutes and agendas, newspaper clippings, reference materials, audio recordings, an office manual, and a poster.</p> <p>The fonds is divided into six series: Rescue and relief letters, Administrative records, Clippings and reference materials, Artifacts, Audiovisual materials, and Posters.</p>
NOTES	<p>Related groups of records external to the unit being described: A CAEJ advertisement that appeared in the Toronto Star can be found in the Larry Becker fonds.</p>
NAME ACCESS	<p>Canadian Association for Ethiopian Jews</p>
SUBJECTS	<p>Associations, institutions, etc Jews, Ethiopian Nonprofit organizations</p>
ACCESS RESTRICTION	<p>Partially closed. Researchers must receive permission from the OJA Director prior to accessing some of the records.</p>
REPRO RESTRICTION	<p>Copyright may not be held by the Ontario Jewish Archives. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain permission prior to use.</p>
PLACES	<p>Canada Ethiopia Israel United States</p>
ACCESSION NUMBER	<p>1993-1-2</p>
SOURCE	<p>Archival Descriptions</p>