

# THE ODYSSEY OF THE OCHBERG ORPHANS

## By Michel Levine

### The Invitation to Journey

What drove Isaac Ochberg, a respectable and prosperous South African businessman, in 1920 to undertake an adventurous expedition thousands of kilometers to the north, into a Europe plunged into the bloody turmoil of civil wars?

For him, things were undoubtedly simple: born Jewish in Ukraine, he had been fortunate enough to flee the hell that awaited him to live under different skies. This chance, he wanted to offer in turn to the most vulnerable children: the orphans.

Isaac Ochberg was born in 1878 in Russia, into a Jewish family of German origin with six children, in the small town of Uman (now Ukrainian) located in what was then known as the 'Pale of Settlement.' <sup>1</sup>Created by Empress Catherine II in 1791, this was a vast area stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, including Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Belarus, Crimea, and part of Poland. When Isaac Ochberg was born, the situation of the five million Jews living there was hardly enviable.



Excluded from public service and higher education, they had gathered in certain city neighborhoods or in small towns called shtetls. Forbidden to own land, they survived by practicing small trades, commerce, crafts, tavern management, but also pawnbroking, this last activity arousing resentment among the common people who had only emerged from serfdom in 1861.

Young Isaac was three years old when the assassination of Tsar Alexander II triggered a series of pogroms that led to a massive exodus. About two million Jews emigrated between 1881 and 1914, mainly to the United States. But it was to South Africa, this land said to also offer a new El Dorado, that his father Aaron decided to emigrate.

He arrived in 1893 in a peaceful country, although sporadically shaken by wars between the Boers, descendants of Dutch settlers, and the British. South Africa was then open to significant immigration following the discovery of gold and diamonds in the Transvaal and welcoming to Jews, a small community of whom had been settled in Cape Town since 1841, living mainly from commerce and crafts while maintaining their distinctiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> In Russian: *tcherta ossedlosti*, in English *Pale of Settlement*, Pale being the translation of the old Russian term *Cheta* denoting an enclosure.

More interested in studying the Talmud than in financial success, Aaron nevertheless managed, after two years, to gather sufficient funds to bring Isaac, his eldest son aged sixteen, who risked being conscripted into the army at any moment for a duration of six long years during which he would be exposed to the worst harassment as a Jew. Upon his arrival in his new homeland, young Isaac demonstrated his talent. Inventive and resourceful, he soon abandoned the watchmaking apprenticeship his father had intended for him to launch into business – all sorts of businesses according to his capricious inspiration, ranging from scrap metal recovery to ship salvaging, passing through coffee sales, gold prospecting in the Transvaal, or creating Cape Town's first cinema. During this period, he made a trip to Russia to visit his ailing mother and took the opportunity to be exempted from military service due to defective vision. He also met Pauline, a friend of his sisters, whom he married before returning to Cape Town with the entire family.

At forty, with an established fortune, father of five children, and an honorable British citizen (the country had been a dominion since 1910), Isaac Ochberg led the life of a notable. An executive member of the Council of Jewish Deputies, representing his country at the 16th World Zionist Conference in Zurich, he participated in managing organizations to help children and orphans in particular – in this capacity, he had participated in founding the Cape Jewish orphanage, of which he became President. It was undoubtedly this last function that led him to become acutely aware of the dramatic situation of Jewish orphans living in Eastern Europe.

At the end of the First World War,<sup>2</sup> from 1917 onwards, Russia had been the theater of a civil war between the Bolshevik "Red" armies and the Tsarist "Whites," the latter supported by contingents of French and British soldiers. The situation worsened in 1919 when the Second Polish Republic undertook a war of territorial reconquest against Soviet Russia. At the same time, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus were the scene of independence uprisings. While these ideological and nationalist forces, mixed with bands of looters, fought each other, they attacked a common prey: the *zhid* (the kike).

For the "Reds," although the new regime had abolished Tsarist anti-Semitic laws and promoted Yiddish as the Jewish national language (while nevertheless proscribing Hebrew, deemed bourgeois and Zionist), this representative of capitalism, "stateless" and "reactionary," remained a class enemy.

For the Tsarist "Whites," driven by ancestral hatred, he had become the "Judeo-Bolshevik" embodied in the person of the Jew Trotsky and held responsible for all the misfortunes of Holy Russia. As their supreme weapon, the "Whites" brandished the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, this forgery manufactured by the political police, the Cheka, which they would then spread in Western Europe during their flight. For the bands of starving peasants, encouraged to revolt by Tsarist forces, the greedy Jew was designated as the absolute culprit, the one who had "killed Christ" and engaged in ritual murders of Christian children, as an ancestral rumor maintained. This justified massacring him and his family and seizing his property.

Of the five million Jews residing in the Pale of Settlement (officially abolished in 1917 by the Bolshevik government) more than one hundred thousand had perished, two hundred thousand

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<sup>2</sup> The South African Union participated in this conflict by fighting against the Central Powers, both in Europe and in the German colonies in Africa.

survived wounded or disabled, and there were more than 150,000 orphans<sup>3</sup>. A 1919 report by the great American Jewish charitable organization the Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) testified: 'In Poland, suffering is intense. There are institutions for children deprived of a morsel of bread, hospitals unusable due to lack of doctors, nurses, and medicines, despite an enormous number of diseases. A large percentage of people have been kept alive thanks to soup consisting of water, potatoes, and a little salt.'

Many voices rose up around the world to denounce these crimes. In London and New York, in particular, meetings and demonstrations were organized in which Jewish veterans of the Great War participated prominently. Under pressure from the Committee of Jewish Delegations, the 1919 Paris Peace Conference ordered a vast inquiry whose reports led to launching an 'Appeal to Humanity' signed by great names such as Anatole France, Henri Barbusse, Elie Faure, and Albert Thomas.

President Wilson expressed his distress: 'One of the things that troubles peace in the world is the persecution of the Jews.' He ordered the creation of a commission led by Henry Morgenthau, future minister under Roosevelt, to investigate the pogroms in Poland (this work could only be carried out in that country, as the new Soviet government had forbidden entry to its territory). This commission traveled through battlefields and mass graves and published upon its return an alarming report on the fate of Jewish minorities.

A commission led by Sir Stuart M. Samuel, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, succeeded it, at the initiative of the representative council of Jews in the United Kingdom. This one in turn denounced the scandalous situation. But these accumulating reports were not followed by action because, lacking a state to represent them, Jews were considered a minority among others, deprived as such of any real political power.

In South Africa, during an extraordinary meeting of the South African Relief Fund, a Jewish organization to aid war victims, Isaac Ochberg proposed that the Cape Jewish orphanage he had been directing for several years organize a mission to 'rescue' endangered Jewish orphans who would then be brought to the country. Certainly, he was aware that this mission close to his heart could only save a very limited number of children, but these would be lives preserved. 'Whoever saves one life saves the world,' Isaac argued, citing the Talmud to support his proposal.

His project was accepted – it remained to obtain the endorsement of the authorities. Prime Minister Jan Smuts, his friend, submitted his project to the government. Good news: Although immigration was strictly limited at that time, the response was positive, with some reservations. Entry visas would be issued to the orphans, but according to very precise criteria: there would be no more than two hundred, not exceeding 16 years of age, they must be in good physical and moral health, have lost both parents, and finally brothers and sisters could not be separated to avoid emotional problems. All, finally, must express their will to participate in this journey.

Heavy-hearted at the idea that he would have to select among these children and abandon some to their fate, Isaac accepted these conditions – we will see that he would interpret them in his own way... What saddened him most was this cut-off figure of 200. He discussed, negotiated, and obtained that after this trip, if things went well, the State would consider repeating the operation. As

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<sup>3</sup> All these figures are approximate, because we then have quite little documentation on these events. What seems established is that the twenties will be those of the greatest massacres that the Jewish people will experience before the Holocaust.

for financing, it was decided that the Jewish community would bear half the cost. This was a significant commitment, as it would have to assume the costs of the journey, the maintenance and care of the 200 children, and then, once they arrived in Africa, the costs of their accommodation in orphanages, some until they came of age if they were not fortunate enough to be adopted by families.

Assisted by the South African Aid Fund for Jewish War Victims, Isaac then launched a campaign across the country, personally traveling through cities and villages to organize public meetings followed by fundraising collections. During this fundraising, critical voices were heard in the Jewish community: would this expedition, conducted in countries at war, not endanger the children concerned? Would their arrival in the country not risk being experienced as a provocation by certain conservative Christian circles, the National Party in particular, when South Africa was experiencing an economic crisis? Some suggested it would be wiser to send these foreign children to the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine). Isaac remained deaf to what he considered submission to intolerance and continued his project.

Soon good news reached him: the fundraising campaign had raised sums far exceeding the expected figures. Dr. Jochelman, president of the federation of Ukrainian Jews in London, had let it be known that his organization was willing to house the orphans and handle their embarkation for South Africa.

On March 18, 1921, in Cape Town, Isaac Ochberg embraced his family, greeted the children of the orphanage, and amid a large gathering that came to encourage him and wish him a good journey, boarded the steamship that would take him to London.  
Expected duration of the expedition: seven months.

### **Poorly Extinguished Fires**

Upon his arrival in the British capital, Isaac learned that the political situation in Eastern Europe had profoundly changed while he was sailing across the ocean. Russia and Poland had just signed a treaty in Riga that granted the latter numerous territories, the Kresy Wschodnie ('Eastern borderlands') which included parts of Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine. This meant that all the cities constituting the stages of the planned journey were now under Polish administration and that the hard-won Soviet safe-conduct was now worthless.

Fortunately, the great explorer Fridtjof Nansen was passing through London. President of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees, he had just created the first international identity document, the 'Nansen passport', a document which from 1922 would protect hundreds of thousands of 'displaced persons' wandering, driven by conflicts and incessant border re-drawings.

During his meeting with the great man, Isaac explained his project to him. Nansen was enthusiastic. He managed to obtain from the new masters of Poland, whom he knew were concerned about international recognition, a safe-conduct authorizing Isaac to travel through the country with the benevolent assistance of local authorities. But as for the orphans, now Polish, how to obtain authorization to take them out of the country? Nansen obtained a commitment from Polish authorities that they would issue them special identity papers: 'collective Nansen passports'.

On May 18, 1921, Isaac began his journey. Paris first, where Dr Boris Borgen, head of the Joint, provided him with authorizations for the heads of orphanages under his organization so that they

would entrust Isaac with the residents he had chosen. Next stop, Warsaw. In the capital of the Second Polish Republic that the Treaty of Versailles had brought back from its ashes in 1919, Isaac hoped to obtain help and assistance without too much illusion however – after all, he was just a zhid who had appeared from nowhere...

In Warsaw, the 'Jewish metropolis' (Di Yidishe metropolye) the Joint officials, who managed most of the country's orphanages, described to him the difficult relations they maintained with victorious Poland. Certainly, its government had ratified in 1920 the treaty annexed to that of Versailles concerning minorities, but nationalist parties accused Jews of having sided with the Bolsheviks during hostilities while the Catholic hierarchy continued to pursue them with its ancestral hatred. This hostility manifested itself through restrictions on credits to orphanages and rationing of their medical protection. Many of these establishments survived only thanks to the help of the Joint or local charitable organizations like Tzedakah Gedolah – which led some non-Jewish orphans to say: "those bastard zhids, they're lucky to have other zhids to come to their aid."<sup>4</sup>

Isaac organized his journey. The large and small cities he would have to visit drew a vast triangle with 400-kilometer sides. First in the north, Brest-Litovsk, then Pinsk, then descent towards Sarny, Kowel, and Rovno to Lvov, finally return to Warsaw where all the chosen children would be gathered, whose state of health would have allowed them to contemplate the journey. Hence the necessity of adding a certain number of round trips to the route. Given the poor state of communications due to the war, he had planned to use trains that were still running, otherwise buses or trucks. He did not yet know that he would also have to use horse-drawn carts.

### Children of Misfortune

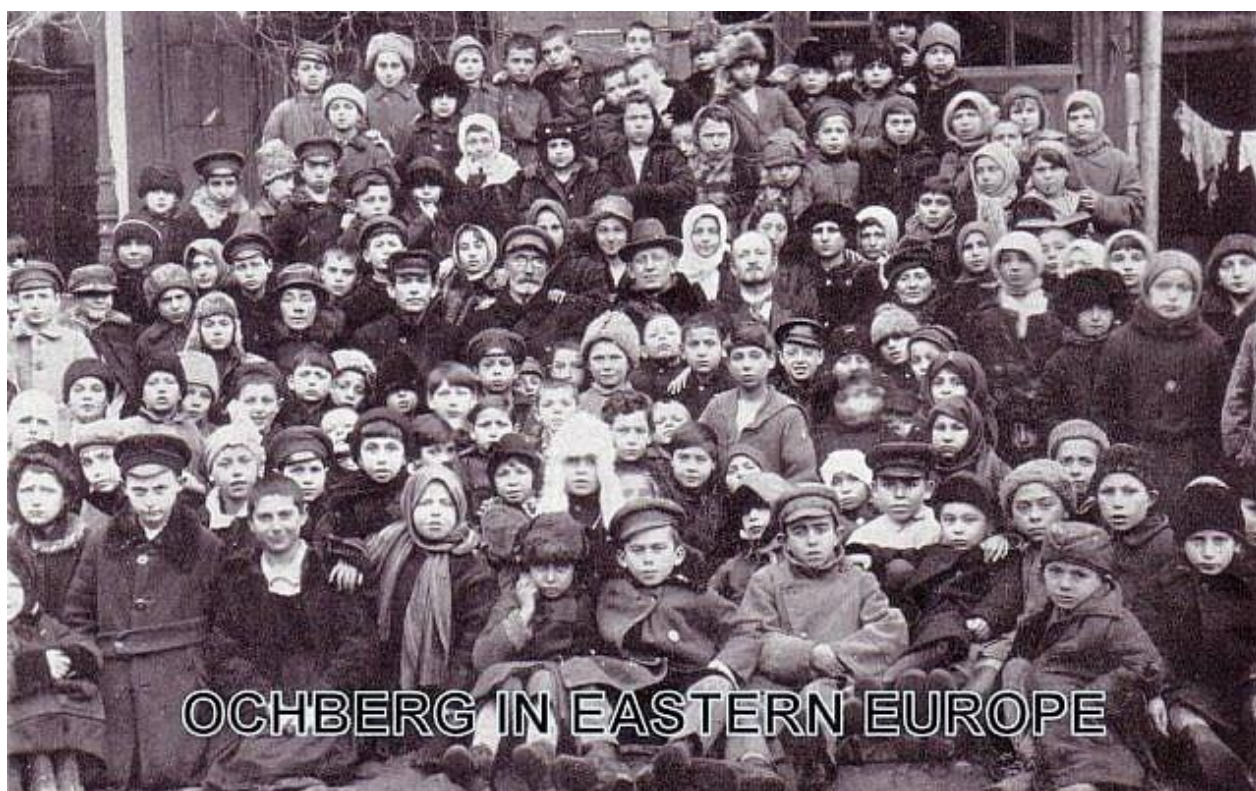


<sup>4</sup> From the thirties, most of the Polish governments will practice the so-called "assimilation" policy resulting in institutional racism of which the German, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Jewish minorities, etc. will be victims.

It was in Brest-Litovsk that he met the children for the first time. They had been waiting for him impatiently because they already knew him through mysterious channels – echoes of discussions between orphanage directors, rumors running through the Jewish community... They warmly welcomed this mysterious stranger from Africa who would choose among them those he would take to his distant country. Imaginations ran wild, they discussed, they imagined... Africa as represented in books was the jungle, with forests full of wild animals and black-skinned men with spears. Going to live in this country where it was always warm, without war, was a radical life change, and also adventure and fear of the unknown.<sup>5</sup>

Yet the 'man from Africa' they discovered did not have the appearance of an adventurer. He was a white-skinned gentleman, calm, dressed like everyone else. He had red hair, a nose topped with spectacles and spoke Yiddish and Russian. He spoke softly to explain how he would choose some of them but leaving them free to refuse or accept to follow him.

For Isaac, contact with the children was natural; he knew how to listen to them, talk to them. His "big number" was to show them how to dismantle a watch using a needle. Quickly, the little orphans gave him their trust and called him Daddy Ochberg, a friendly nickname they would use throughout their lives and would be adopted by their descendants. Daddy Ochberg also observed them. He found them thin and tired, due to lack of food and vitamin intake. But they were very clean thanks to the weekly ritual bath preceding Shabbat that they were given, not to mention tooth



brushing in the morning and hand washing (netilat yadayim) upon waking, before meals, after using the toilet, and before prayer. This bodily hygiene, which put into practice the Jewish concept 'cleanliness leads to piety' (nekiut mevi'a lidei hasidut), was practiced in all orphanages, religious or secular.

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<sup>5</sup> "One day," recalled Fanny Slier (née Lockitch), an orphan taken in at Brest-Litovsk, "we heard that a 'man from Africa' was going to arrive. He was going to take some of us with him and offer them a new home at the other end of the world(...) The news aroused in us mixed feelings. We were all happy to go to a beautiful new country, but we also heard stories of thieves and wild animals and we thought we might be devoured by lions."

“Daddy Ochberg”. Isaac Ochberg (centre) with his rescued orphans in 1921 in Eastern Europe before leaving for South Africa. (photo unidentified from a post on the internet)

All these orphans he addressed, Isaac admired for still behaving like children. Yet their brains were full of horrifying images. They had seen, they had often experienced the death of their parents, members of their family; before their eyes, bodies had collapsed face down, pierced by bullets. They had seen typhus, rooms filled with corpses and people crying near the bodies. They had witnessed rapes, they had hidden in cellars then in fields and forests, they had found themselves alone or with another family member just as traumatized as they were. They had been hungry and thirsty and sought their sustenance, sometimes herbs in the forest or help from villagers or stolen bread, sometimes given by soldiers, the very ones who had killed their loved ones. People wanted to kill them, but why? The older ones already knew the hatred the outside world bore toward Jews; the little ones suffered without understanding.

Throughout his journey, Isaac would better discern the marks of their suffering, for example this stubborn attachment they had to one or another of their educators to the point of staying near them as much as possible throughout the day or forming an inseparable group with one or more of their comrades. They were on the alert; the slightest noise made them jump and even hide. During meals, they showed a sort of greed by swallowing very quickly – some made reserves by hiding some food under their pillow or near their bed. They kept fetish objects making a connection with their life before – a toy, a fabric, a simple pebble – which they would never part with at any price. Religious rites, which formed a link with the disappeared family, also constituted a framework that helped them give logic, continuity to their existence in this mad world. Isaac, conscious of this contribution, would take care throughout the journeys, and often it would be complicated, to ensure that certain rites like kosher food were continually observed.

During his stop in Pinsk, he met Alter (Alexander) Bobrow, an important figure in helping orphans. In this city, in 1920, a thousand Jews had been massacred by Polish forces under General Bulak-Balachowicz. Bobrow, with the help of residents, had first organized a soup kitchen to feed wandering Jewish children. But very quickly, this aid proved insufficient. Children were flocking in and they needed to find them clothes and protect them throughout day and night. He first created with his friends, members like him of Poale Zion,<sup>6</sup> three makeshift orphanages set up in empty buildings or ruins. At the start, they had neither bedding nor clothes, to the point that they used flour sacks as makeshift clothes. The situation gradually improved with the help of supplies distributed by the Joint, particularly the very precious condensed milk in cans<sup>7</sup>.

There were also destitute children hidden in the surrounding countryside. With his team, he would go recover them, from village to village, sometimes hidden in the rubble of their homes where their loved ones had perished or fled into the woods. Terrified, barely daring to come out of their hiding place, they were starving. So to “trap” them, food was placed in the forest or they watched near grocery stores where owners complained that food was being stolen from them.

This generous and devoted man had also founded a school, open to all children, Jewish or not. The orphans loved to hear him sing while accompanying himself on his mandolin and had a real

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<sup>6</sup> The Poale Zion is a Marxist Zionist movement founded in 1901 after the rejection of the Zionist project by the Bund.

<sup>7</sup> One of the American humanitarian workers participating in their distribution was none other than Henry Morgenthau, future US Treasury Secretary in the Roosevelt government.

attachment to him, to the point that some of them, chosen to leave for Africa, would refuse to leave the boarding school if Alter did not accompany them to Africa. He would obey.

During the regrouping in Warsaw, Alter fell ill. The children were very worried, to the point of setting up a ladder under his bedroom window and climbing it to check on his health <sup>8</sup>. In the city, a great outpouring of generosity manifested itself and the children were housed in premises rented by the Pinsker Orphans Relief Fund. Lunches were offered in a large restaurant by the owner, Mrs. Panya Engel. It was a feast for these guests accustomed to the strict minimum to devour white bread on beautiful white tablecloths, to discover dishes they didn't know. When they left Warsaw, each of them would take a small photo of Payna, which can certainly still be found in the albums or cardboard boxes of their descendants...

Warsaw was also the place of final administrative procedures. Contrary to their commitment, Polish authorities never provided the slightest assistance to the expedition. On the contrary, each child often found themselves forced to fill out endless Kafkaesque forms. However, nowadays, one can observe, if one looks at the copies that still exist, from Pinsk for example, that they are very little filled in, which suggests that Polish employees sometimes decided not to be too scrupulous...

The study of other documents, large cardboard sheets with photos of groups of children glued on them, serving as collective passports, raise some questions for historians <sup>9</sup> Indeed, 187 children appear on them. However, the agreement with the South African government was to welcome 200. Some testimonies indicate other figures... In fact, we will never know exactly how many orphans made the journey. In this very troubled period, this gap can be explained in different ways. Children may have withdrawn at the last minute out of fear of leaving the places to which they were attached, or fallen ill.

We also know that Isaac himself sometimes tried to circumvent the required conditions for the children's departure, hence some "false orphans" like Regina Altman or the Tannenbaum sisters, whom their mothers had entrusted to Isaac in desperation so that he could provide them with a better life. There were also adolescents over 16 years old embarked as nurses or companions who upon their arrival in Cape Town would become "real" orphans again. <sup>10</sup>

On August 1, 1921, children and companions took the train from Warsaw to Gdansk (Danzig). In the regions through which the railway line passed, 'media coverage' as we would say today, had been actively undertaken in Jewish societies. At each train stop, the young passengers were greeted with cheers, food and flowers offered by adults they didn't know and who wished them a good journey and a better life. The children got off on the platform, sang and danced with them, a little jostled by being celebrated this way, which at the same time compensated for the stress of departure, this break in their lives.

Arriving at the port of Gdansk, a small British cargo ship awaited them, the *Baltara*, direction England. A short crossing that served as a prelude to the big one.

## London

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<sup>8</sup> Recovered, he will continue the journey until the return to South Africa, where he will end his life.

<sup>9</sup> They are preserved in the Jewish Museum of San Francisco.

<sup>10</sup> Other pass, concerning the physical state: Harry Stillerman, five years old, was accepted although his arm was amputated by a blow from a Cossack saber...

On August 24, the orphans had barely settled into the premises of the Shelter for Jewish Poor located in the East End when representatives of the British and international press appeared. Extracting children from a turbulent and dangerous Europe, often saving their lives, was a bold move that surprised them and that they were very eager to make known. Gathered in a room, the orphans were presented to journalists. They stood properly, under the flashes. Isaac, surrounded by officials, answered questions. He made it a duty to insist on the role played by charitable organizations and the support of the South African government. He also pleaded for other countries to take over and welcome other children. In his eyes, this was a necessity. The next day, when he read the press, disappointment: the journey was presented almost exclusively as a heroic act... facing 'Bolshevik barbarism'. It must be said that this was a time when the red scare reigned, which particularly animated British and American conservative circles, whose country was experiencing numerous worker revolts that they attributed to the harmful influence of the new Soviet regime.

Preparation for the journey to Cape Town was organized. It was a long trip and the children had to be in good physical shape and not be carriers of diseases that might contaminate other passengers. Medical examinations followed one another. Numerous cases of anemia were detected, which would not prevent embarkation, but also more serious conditions, which required hospitalizing some children. The latter would remain in London, which was a great heartbreak for them, but they could keep hope that soon a new voyage to Cape Town would come get them, or that other countries would decide to welcome them <sup>11</sup>. Doctors and nurses were hired for the journey.

On September 2, children and companions took the train to Southampton where the steamship Edinburgh Castle awaited them. Direction Cape Town.

### **The Crossing**

Two hundred children on a boat...Many were afraid of this dark and vibrating mass, then very quickly got used to it. The cabins and deck had been specially fitted out for these particular passengers. The large steamship offered them an enclosed space, a playground, where they loved to run, but under supervision, because their vitality led them to often bump into chimneys, ropes, and in narrow passages. At night, they laughed and cried too, fought with pillows.

The sailors, of various nationalities, were very friendly – some told them stories about their country, incredible stories. As for the cooks, they were reluctant to prepare this complicated kosher food but complied with the instructions. Nurses and doctors had their work cut out for them monitoring big and small ailments and seasickness. They drew their medicines from a large carefully arranged pharmacy. One of the children had mumps, which required special care during a stopover. The companions organized games. On deck, the wind rushed into their clothes and made the little caps they had been given at departure fly, some flew away and float on the waves. The passengers, sometimes jostled, were mostly touched and moved by the story the children had lived through, and they applauded the God Save the King that they sometimes sang, with a very particular accent.

### **The Promised Land**

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<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, Ochberg will not receive a new authorization from the Polish authorities to come and collect orphans. But in 1940, Jan Smuts managed to organize a new collection of Jewish orphans from Poland, which will save nearly 500.



After 17 days of crossing, early in the morning, the children grouped on deck saw lights blinking on the horizon on a gray land planted with misty and dark mountains. The sailors pointed out to them one of them, with a curiously flat summit, called Table Mountain. The boat approached and soon the children distinguished more precisely people who had come to welcome them carrying flowers and brandishing welcome banners in Yiddish. These people had white skin, others black, it really was Africa... As the cargo docked, a song was launched by the children and taken up on the quay. Everyone knew the words, so moving in these circumstances: "Hinei ma tov u'ma nayim Shevet achim gam yachad" ('How good and pleasant it is to live in united families'). Greeted by the cheers of a crowd in tears, the children disembarked. 'Until my last day', Fanny Frier would write, a little girl who would later become president of the Cape orphanage, 'I will never forget the first time we saw the lights of Cape Town, then the wonderful welcome we received when we disembarked, when half the city apparently awaited us on the quay'.

## Integration

What would become of these little beings thus projected into this new world? Taken in and raised in the two orphanages Arcadia and Oranjia, most would be adopted by families where they would live their childhood surrounded by attention and love. Then they would set out to conquer the vast world to experience the most diverse destinies. Almost all would have children, often numerous<sup>12</sup>

For years, their descendants, who now number several thousand, have ritually gathered to celebrate with emotion the anniversary of their arrival and the memory of Daddy Ochberg, the 'man from Africa' who came to get them before the Shoah exterminated most of the other Jewish children who remained in Europe.

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<sup>12</sup> Many will engage in the struggle against apartheid which, in some way, concerns them because they will deeply understand its meaning as foreigners, Jews and "separated" themselves too...

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## Films

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Further Reading on the internet

<https://www.isaacochberg.org/> **Isaac Ochberg and the Ochberg Orphans**

***The heroic story of Daddy Ochberg and how he saved 200 orphans***

A comprehensive website with stories, maps, newspaper articles, photographs and memoirs.

<https://salegion.org.uk/4167-2/>

The story of Isaac Ochberg and Jan Smuts

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Biography:

**Michel Levine**, a historian of Human Rights, is notably the author of a work devoted to major cases of the League of Human Rights (*Unclassified Cases. Unpublished Archives of the League of Human Rights*, Paris, Favard, 1973). He has also published a historical investigation into the repression of Algerian demonstrations in Paris in October 1961 (*The October Razzias. A Collective Murder in Paris in 1961*, Paris, Ramsay, 1985; reissued by Jean-Claude Gawsewitch Éditeur, 2011).

Presentation:

"For several years now, I have been dedicated to the contemporary history of the Jewish people, particularly their acts of rescue and resistance. But I must say that it was somewhat by chance that I learned about the journey of these orphans and the personality of Isaac Ochberg. It is true that the life of Jewish communities in South Africa is little known in Europe. I hope to have contributed to enriching it by recounting this touching odyssey..."