

# Edwin S Munger 1922-2010: Academic bridge-builder in South Africa

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## Abstract

Edwin S. Munger (1921-2010), professor of Political Geography at Caltech Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California was a renowned specialist on Africa, race and ethnic relations. In his scores of trips to the African continent, he visited every country and lived in South Africa and some others for extended periods. While he expressed opposition to race discrimination and the negative aspects of apartheid measures, he also strongly rejected violence and international pressures to isolate South Africa. He saw such pressures as counterproductive in affecting change. This article deals with his endeavour to build bridges of understanding between and with South Africans so as to bring about change in these policies and as a counter to the growing international pressures to impose harmful sanctions and isolation. It sketches the means by which Munger pursued his objectives through various organisations, among them the leader exchange programmes under US-SALEP, the African Studies Association, Nieman Fellowship Awards and the Cape of Good Hope Foundation.

**Keywords:** Opposition to discriminatory measures in Apartheid; Opposition to isolation; Boycotts and punitive measures; Contact, dialogue and bridge building with South Africa; US-SALEP, the African Studies Association; Nieman Fellowship Awards; Cape of Good Hope Foundation.

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin (or Ned among friends) and I first met by chance in a second-hand bookshop in New York in the nineteen fifties. Both of us in quest of books relating to Africa. In later life it was easy to fall in step with this congenial and gregarious companion. He enriched my own life with his effervescent personality, his erudite understanding, his store of anecdotes and his caring friendship. Ned is survived by Ann, his wife of forty years, who had cared for him during a long illness until he died at his home in Pasadena. He had, some years ago, suffered a stroke which impaired his speech. It was through her kindness, interpreting his speech that I was able to keep in touch with Ned on the 'phone in recent times. Mercifully his mind remained bright and alert to the end.

## **Introduction**

The death at 88 of Dr. Edwin S Munger, Caltech Professor Emeritus of Political Geography in Pasadena, California, who passed away at his home in Pasadena on 18 June 2010, was mourned in many countries around the world as evidenced by the many participants in the memorial *Celebrating the Life of Ned Munger* in the Athenaeum at Caltech on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010.<sup>2</sup> A renowned specialist on Africa during the second half of the twentieth century, Munger became a familiar figure on the scene in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. He had developed a host of friends there from all walks of life. In the light of his active involvement in South African affairs over that period it would seem appropriate to place on record (and even argue) his role in the raging international debate on apartheid and subsequent developments in South Africa.

This article seeks to sketch Munger's general and academic bridge-builder interests in South Africa; deliberating views on the Afrikaner and the involvement of Afrikaners in the international debate on South Africa. It will also give an account of some aspects of Munger's opposition to South Africa's isolation while at the same time rejecting policies of racial discrimination under apartheid. He saw this aspect of apartheid as aberrations in the official policy as well as contrary to some of the very tenets which the Afrikaner held so dearly: freedom, devotion to biblical teachings and to the rule of law. These arguments are also debated in the discussion to follow.

Image 1: Professor Edwin S Munger



Source: [http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010\\_Summer\\_Munger.html](http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010_Summer_Munger.html)

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a CD of the Athenaeum, received by the author from Ann Munger, Prof Munger's widow.

## **Africa as field of study after the Second World War**

In the years immediately after the Second World War (1939-1945), there was a rush in most universities in the United States to establish Africa Studies departments to cope with the renewed interest in this continent. That interest was focused largely, though not exclusively, on the human condition in African countries. Prominent American academics made Africa the subject of their research and their destination for frequent visits.<sup>3</sup> Dr Munger, or Ned as he became fondly known to his many friends and associates, was an early starter in that rush into the African scene. At the time Munger was completing his studies for his PhD at the University of Chicago (in Political Geography), and in 1947 he set off on his first visit to Africa. Munger paid for the trip himself with money he won at poker in the army, a fact he liked to mention in later years with a mischievous suggestion of pride.<sup>4</sup>

On his second visit to Africa in 1949, Munger went to Uganda as the first Fulbright scholar to study at Makerere<sup>5</sup> University in Kampala. This was to be followed over the next fifty years by countless other journeys, visiting some countries frequently; he was to visit South Africa more than thirty times.<sup>6</sup> From 1950 to 1954 he was an Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) Fellow in Africa and from 1955 to 1961 an American Universities Field Staff member. During the fifties and sixties Munger lived for extended periods in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, while at the same time serving on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

Edwin Munger's passion for Africa led to his founding of the African Studies Association in 1957<sup>7</sup> as well as the U.S.–South African Leader Exchange Program. He also supported extending the Nieman Fellowships<sup>8</sup> to South

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3 This statement is based on the author's personal observations during 14 years residence in the USA as a diplomat and some frequent contacts with American academics.

4 Personal and repeated exchange to the author in some of the obituaries.

5 It is uncertain what courses Munger studied at Makerere University in Kampala, although it can be assumed that it probably covered the field of ethnography.

6 The author's personal knowledge and obituaries.

7 This Association, at the time of writing, was 1700 members strong and multi disciplinary of nature; (available at: [http://africanstudies.terradorita.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent\\_ID=0&LinkID=9E038A77-26B9-564D-D688909DCA74D643](http://africanstudies.terradorita.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent_ID=0&LinkID=9E038A77-26B9-564D-D688909DCA74D643), as accessed in 2011).

8 It is said that the Nieman Foundation's acceptance of foreign journalists "began at the end of World War II with a few South Americans "under some arrangement that Nelson Rockefeller talked us into. Word of the opportunity spread and soon the dozen American fellows were joined by journalists from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and, in 1960, South Africa". Among several sources on the topic, (available at: <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/NiemanFoundation/NiemanFellowships/MeetTheFellows/SouthAfricanFellows.aspx>, as accessed in 2011).

Africa from 1960.<sup>9</sup> Munger served as a board member of the South African Institute of Race Relations from 1960 and one of his books, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism*, was published for that Institute in 1967.<sup>10</sup> He was also instrumental in launching the Foundation's Franklin Baldwin Fellowships in 1978,<sup>11</sup> which have financially supported more than 70 Africans to obtain advanced degrees in anthropology.<sup>12</sup> Apart from being instrumental in launching the Leakey Foundation's aforementioned Baldwin Fellowships in the late seventies Munger for 14 years acted as president of the LSB Leakey Foundation.<sup>13</sup>

### **Focus on organisations and societies in South Africa**

As Munger's interest in the South Africa grew, so did his involvement with organisations and societies focussed on the region. Prominent among these bodies are the African Studies Association and the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program (US-SALEP). Both organisations were to play a pivotal role in Munger's involvement in South Africa from the late 1950's to the nineteen eighties.

Munger's enthusiasm for books as source of knowledge led him to amass a library of more than 50 000 volumes on Africa, said to be the largest of its kind in private hands.<sup>14</sup> As an adjunct to this collection he started publishing

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9 The internet program on *The Franklin Baldwin Fellowship program* states that the Fellowships was the brainchild of former Board President Ned Munger and Elisabeth G. O'Connor, the widow of Franklin Mosher Baldwin. The full story is told in ES Munger's *Touched by Africa, (Pasadena, California, 1983)*, (available at: <http://www.caltechbook.library.caltech.edu/173/>, as accessed in 2011).

10 ES Munger, *Afrikaner and African nationalism: South African parallels and parameters* (Institute for Race Relations, OUP, London, 1967), pp. 142, as reviewed in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 3, January 1968, pp. 155-156; D Williams, Review of Munger publication in *Geographical Review*, 59(4), October 1969, pp. 626-628.

11 It is said that "Baldwin was a distinguished attorney that took a lively interest in the search for human origins until his death". In hoping to honour her late husband's dual interests in early man and education, O'Connor embraced the idea of a program to educate African scholars in prehistory and paleo-anthropology. See Anon., "The Franklin Mosher Baldwin Fellowship", (available at: <http://leakeyfoundation.org/grants/applicants/baldwins/> as accessed in 2011).

12 Compare M Asturias, "Educational grants for Anthropologists", EHow, (available at: [http://www.ehow.com/list\\_5976229\\_educational-grants-anthropologists.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_5976229_educational-grants-anthropologists.html) as accessed in 2011).

13 See obituary of Munger, (available at: [http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010\\_Summer\\_Munger.html](http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010_Summer_Munger.html)); and a press release by J Weiner, (available at: [http://media.caltech.edu/press\\_releases/13356](http://media.caltech.edu/press_releases/13356), on ES Munger, 18 June 1988 as accessed in 2011).

14 Personal memories of the author.

a series of more than 80 issues of the *Munger Africana Library Notes*.<sup>15</sup> As an aide to the study of African affairs, these publications, edited by him until 1985, reproduced the texts of a wide variety of miscellaneous documents, reports, letters, studies and more, that related to Africa.

In 1985, Munger established the Cape of Good Hope Foundation to help mostly black universities in southern Africa financially, and subsequently sent more than \$3 million worth of books through the efforts of this Foundation to support some needy black institutions.<sup>16</sup> He edited the *Munger Africana Library Notes* (1969–1982) and amassed a library of over 60,000 volumes on sub-Saharan Africa, the largest private collection in the United States and a unique cultural resource.<sup>17</sup>

Many are rare documents which he unearthed in his forays; some of historic importance to South Africa. One such example contains the texts of five “*Dear Franklin*” letters to President Franklin Roosevelt exactly as they were written in 1942/3 by Lincoln McVeagh, the American Minister in Pretoria<sup>18</sup>. The letters record the minister’s assessment of South Africa’s wartime efforts and his conversations with General Jan Smuts. Apart from his many books, Munger was also a prolific writer of articles for a wide variety of journals. A major article by Munger on South Africa appeared in 1969 in the *American Journal of Foreign Affairs*.<sup>19</sup>

While Munger maintained his contacts and attachments to other parts of Africa, there was a period when he made South Africa a major focus of his academic, personal and political attention. He was a research fellow at the University of Stellenbosch in the early stages of his academic career (1960’s). This was when he started becoming involved in the South African Institute

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15 See the *Munger Africana Library notes* [MALN]. The contents of the MALN can be accessed on the Internet under that title on the Munger website. Altogether some 78 issues of this publication on a wide range of African subjects appeared under the editorial direction of Professor Munger during the period 1970 to 1985. A full list of the contents of these publications are available at the California Institute of Technology (website link?) and on the Internet under Munger Africana Library Notes.

16 See “Edwin S Munger, 1921-2010” in *Obituaries of Engineering & Science Journal*, California Institute of Technology, (available at: [http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010\\_Summer\\_Munger.html](http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010_Summer_Munger.html) as accessed in 2011).

17 (Available at: <http://caltechmaln.library.caltech.edu/82/>, for the index to the Munger Africana Library notes, as indexed by Wilma Fairchild in 1975).

18 Index *Munger Africana Library Notes* (MALN). The SA Library in Cape Town - used to have copies. In addition all are available on the Internet as stated above. Also see *The California Institute of Technology* in issue 76 of 1985 on the *Munger Africana Library*, (available at: [http://books.google.com/books/about/Munger\\_Africana\\_Library\\_notes.html?id=SGUEAQAIAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/Munger_Africana_Library_notes.html?id=SGUEAQAIAAJ), as accessed in 2011).

19 ES Munger, “South Africa: Are there silver linings?”, *American Journal of Foreign Affairs*, January 1969. Full text available on the Internet under this title.

of Race Relations. In the 1960s Munger and his first wife Elizabeth Nelson lived for a year in Rosebank, Cape Town, in the house of Irma Stern. Until he retired in 1982 he was Professor of Political Geography at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. In 1993 he received the Alumni Citation Award for public Service from the University of Chicago.<sup>20</sup>

### **Munger on the Afrikaner and their principles of apartheid**

Munger was outspoken by what he saw as aberrations in the apartheid system after 1948, namely an enforced segregation of races, race classification, group areas, restrictions on freedom of movement and so on. He spoke and wrote about his opposition to racial discriminatory measures.<sup>21</sup>

He did, however, not agree with the tendency among his fellow Americans to see the South African situation as an extension of the American civil rights movement.<sup>22</sup> In this he had the support of, among others, Dr George Kennan of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton and former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Kennan had come to South Africa on three visits under the sponsorship of US-SALEP. In Kennan's subsequent report he states "Americans did not understand the situation in SA; the racial situations in the two countries are not comparable".<sup>23</sup> This is indeed the burden of Munger's book *Afrikaner and African Nationalism* where the issue is examined extensively. Kennan does the same in his cited report.

As emerges from his books on the subject, Munger made an intense effort to study and analyse the Afrikaner who formed the heart of the Nationalist government. Apart from many articles on the Afrikaner, he was involved in three major studies on the subject, either as author, editor or major contributor.<sup>24</sup>

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20 Compare [http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010\\_Summer\\_Munger.html](http://eands.caltech.edu/articles/LXXIII3/2010_Summer_Munger.html).

21 See Munger's writings in the three books on South Africa.

22 Munger makes this clear in his books and Kennan in his cited report. See *Munger Africana Library Notes #2* page 5.

23 See *Munger Africana Library Notes #2*, pp. 5 and further.

24 See the writings of ES Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism; South African parallels and parameters* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967); HW van der Merwe (Ed.), *Contribution to looking at the Afrikaner today; Views of compatriots and foreigners*, (Tafelberg, Capetown, 1975) and ES Munger (Ed.), *The Afrikaners* (Tafelberg, Capetown, 1979).

Munger's efforts to come to grips with what made the Afrikaner "tick", led him to conclude that the concept of a "common nationalism",<sup>25</sup> so prevalent in other countries, was absent in South Africa.<sup>26</sup> This formed a crucial element in his approach to the South African situation. Munger always hastened to make it clear that "understanding" the Afrikaner did not imply that he approved. His comments in this regard states:<sup>27</sup>

But let me immediately hoist a semantic flag. Afrikaners, in my thirty years of experience with them, usually use the word 'understand' to mean 'approve'. I understand the Afrikaners' text better than the exposition thereof.

It was also Munger's conclusion that the measures in South African policies which he found offensive had grown mainly from fears among the Afrikaners.<sup>28</sup> These fears were rooted in their own stormy history and the bitter legacy and hurt of the Anglo-Boer War/South African War; fear of losing their identity; fear of losing the treasured content of their culture, their *taal* (language) and their hard-won freedom; fear of being overwhelmed by an alien culture and nationalism; and fear of what they saw as a communist threat both internally and from the Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup>

While Munger was offended by and opposed to the racially discriminatory measures since 1948 he was equally opposed to international pressures to isolate South Africa and to institute punitive measures. He thought such actions would not help the situation and would in fact be counterproductive. Instead, he encouraged dialogue and increased contact, stimulating communication and building bridges of understanding. It was his objective to foster this type of actively.

Unlike most of his peers in the field, Munger had lived for extended periods and studied in various African countries; he was always somewhere in Africa

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25 Munger stated that "[South Africa] contains two powerful and competing nationalisms - African (about 12,000,000 people) and Afrikaner (about 2,000,000 people - revolving around each other like a binary star and far outshining the weak light of a nebulous South African nationalism... . Thus not South African but Afrikaner and African Nationalisms overshadow the country"; ES Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 1. Munger's book "The Lack of Unity and the Absence of Symbols of a Single Nationalism", Chapter Two, expands on this discussion.

26 Refers to Afrikaner and African Nationalism. Munger deals with the ingredients of Afrikaner Nationalism in the Introduction and Chapter I of *Afrikaner and African Nationalism*.

27 ES Munger (Ed.), *The Afrikaners*. (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1979) p. 2.

28 On Afrikaner fears see A Starcke, *Survival: Taped interviews with South Africa's Power Elite* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1978); H Adam and H Giliomee, *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1979).

29 See for example sources by FransJohan Pretorius and also see G Cuthbertson, A Grundlingh and Mary-Lynn Suttie (Eds.), *Writing a wider war. Rethinking gender, race and identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Ohio University Press, Ohio, 2002), pp. 345.

on his peripatetic travels; he had developed a wide range of close African friends and had sponsored some for study in the United States.<sup>30</sup> He even became godfather to their children. (Two of his godchildren from Uganda, now a grown man and woman, spoke movingly at Munger's memorial in Pasadena.)<sup>31</sup>

His experience in Africa had led him to accept certain African realities; certain immutable aspects of the legacy of its history which had to be respected. South Africa had to be seen in the light of these complex African realities that were not susceptible to easy or quick fixes. Against this background, Munger's approach to the South African dilemma was for patient dialogue, increased contact and opposition to isolation.<sup>32</sup> Munger's approach is both historical and comparative. He argued that South African was not a melting pot, like the United States but a common nationalism was being forged out of both Afrikaner and African nationalism:<sup>33</sup>

'[It] will be the product of the vleie, vlaktes and kwiinduli nem-lambo' (the marshes and plains in Afrikaans, and the hills and rivers in Xhosa).

Thus, those wishing South Africa well, according to Munger, had to study both the distinctiveness and the commonalities of the two nations. He warned against imposing explanatory models and theories from abroad. The nationalisms of South Africa were more likely to influence each other than to be moulded from abroad. For those who wished South Africa well the key requirement was to listen and understand South Africans and expose them in a constructive way to new thinking outside South Africa.

He found support for his approach of rather embracing South Africa than being hostile in the style and methodology of Professor Henry Kissinger:<sup>34</sup>

And yet, when as a professor I first visited South Africa in 1962 to speak at workshops organized by European Lutheran churches, I became convinced that, when all was said and done, this beautiful and melancholy land would not end in the catastrophe that reason and history predicted. Even more oddly, I began to believe that it would ultimately be the Afrikaners, ostensibly the more repressive element of the white population, and not seemingly more

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30 Personal memories by the author.

31 Program for the Memorial at the Athenaeum.

32 Personal impressions by the author.

33 ES Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism: South African parallels and parameters* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 131.

34 See the memoirs of Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1999), pp. 791, 963.

liberal English community, which would lead the way. Somehow through some hidden instinct I could not describe and which the Afrikaners vociferously denied, it seemed predestined that they would find a way, albeit after much turmoil, whereby the very depth of the common suffering – the fear giving rise to oppression and the strength required to survive it – would be distilled into some new form of South African identity, and that it would come about not by way of Western liberalism but by an arrangement brokered between South Africa's white and black tribes.

His valuable *Notes from the Munger Africana library*, which Ned Munger issued occasionally to subscribers, included field research reports, analysis and documentary material on South Africa. One of them most illuminating reports was that by George Kennan, who visited the country in 1971 as a guest of the United States-South Africa Leadership Exchange. A highly esteemed figure in American academic and diplomatic circles, Kennan had served as a diplomat in Moscow between 1944 and 1946, and went on to become perhaps the most distinguished commentator on the Cold War. An article "The sources of Soviet conduct" (also known as "Telegram" X), of which he was later revealed to be the author, depicted the Soviet system as inherently unstable. He advocated "containment" and letting time do its work rather than urge a forceful confrontation.

On South Africa Kennan remarked that to anyone raised with traditional American values the situation was nothing less than tragic. Nevertheless he opposed sanctions and other forms of external intervention. He took what he called the historian's view: "there are problems which, at the time they occur, are insoluble." In answer to the argument by some black observers that conditions could not get worse, he referred to his Moscow experience: "Joe Stalin taught the Soviet people one thing: When you think that life cannot get any harder, it can."

Considering the NP government's policies, Kennan did not consider it necessary for South Africa to be "homogenized in order to be happy." Accordingly, he had nothing against the NP government's policy of giving the various African black groups their own territories and of extending full economic rights to black living there. He was, however, highly critical of the government's pretence that the presence of millions of blacks in the major industrial centres of South Africa was only a "temporary condition". All the people in South Africa, Kennan went on, "were caught in a situation which none of them had created themselves". Deploring the gap between whites and

blacks, he stated that he would like to see a narrowing of the gap.<sup>35</sup>

In his *Notes* Munger often commented on Kennan's reports. Munger wrote:

Dr Kennan is critical ... of the official American approach to South Africa and particularly of that adopted by a majority of U.S. scholars. He cites the presence of leaders in South Africa who are 'sincere and valuable people'. All of the people, whatever their pigmentation, are caught in a situation which none of them have created by themselves, and isolation will not help them to find the necessary solutions. Neither will economic sanctions be of aid to them.<sup>36</sup>

Kennan himself went on to write in his report that he would like a situation where Americans would report frankly and bluntly to South Africans their reactions to conditions in South Africa. Americans, he added, should credit Afrikaners with "human decency" and not tend to expel them from the human race as some kind of "moral monsters". For these reasons he strongly favoured the maximum exchange of both ideas and people between the United States and South Africa. Kennan added:<sup>37</sup>

This is, as I see it, the purpose which the Exchange Program was designed to serve and is serving.

### **The USA Leader Exchange Programme (US-SALEP)**

Kennan's proposal was, indeed, the purpose for which US-SALEP was designed as a vehicle to encourage contact with South Africa, to stimulate dialogue and to build bridges. Munger used his active involvement in US-SALEP and also in the African Studies Association to promote these objectives by Kennan through the mutual exchange of academic experts from the American and South African leadership communities.<sup>38</sup>

US-SALEP, was founded in 1958 as an initiative jointly of Munger and the American Friends Service Committee together with representatives of eleven religious, philanthropic, educational and cultural organisations. Its objective was to foster the two-way exchange of South African and American leader personalities to encourage intergroup understanding and the promotion of

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35 See "Three visitors report", *Munger Africana library notes*, March 1971, p. 2. In the same year as Kennan's visit Heribert Adam's *Modernizing racial domination: South Africa's political dynamics* (University of California Press, 1971) appeared. It argued that a revolution was not imminent and that the regime was capable of adapting its labour system pragmatically. The book dominated the academic debate for nearly 15 years.

36 See Notes from the Munger Africana library, March 1971 (as MALN #2), pp. 2-3.

37 See "Three visitors report", *Munger Africana library notes*, March 1971, p. 2.

38 *Munger Africana library notes*, March 1971, p. 18.

peaceful change. Over the next forty years some 400 leading individuals from all walks of life and all sides of the racial and political divide both countries, were awarded foreign leader grants. The 90 day programmes of the South African Leaders typically included discussions with members of Congress, members of the Cabinet, prominent academics, officials and business leaders, depending on the visitor's wishes and interests. Munger played a prominent role in the itinerary arrangements, normally meeting the South African visitors at his home in Pasadena, briefing them and having them participating in seminars and other activities.

Two well-known South African public figures, Colin Eglin and Zach de Beer, were among the first South Africans to be awarded foreign leader grants in 1960. In his published memoirs Eglin reflects favourably on their experience. He lists some of the items on their programme, the United Nations General Assembly, the Institute for International Education, the U.S. Congress, and the Harvard Business School, among them. Eglin writes:<sup>39</sup>

I was invigorated by the spirit of enterprise, of self-reliance, and the belief in their ability to succeed which permeated US society and which comprised the driving force behind the country's remarkable achievements... But more than this, I needed at intervals to escape from the cloying and insidious atmosphere of apartheid to recharge my commitment to liberal democratic values.

Through Munger's initiative the Nieman Fellowship award was extended to South African journalists in 1960. This provided another string to his bow of countering South Africa's isolation.<sup>40</sup> He became involved in the selection of South Africans for these annual awards which offered a year of study at Harvard. Since 1960 some 58 South Africans have so far benefited from it (See Appendix B attached).

Munger devised some other ingenious ways of fostering contact and extending the existing bonds. He wrote about a main reason to live in Irma Stern's house in Cape Town for a year:<sup>41</sup>

The fourteenth century dining room table she acquired from a monastery in Spain. It was long but narrow. This made conversation across the table easy ... and you can talk not only to the left and right, but across the table. This was important, because one of our purposes in taking the house was conversation.

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39 C Eglin, *Crossing the borders of power* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 2007, 2008), p. 92.

40 Opportunities for academic and cultural exchanges rapidly diminished since the early 1960s.

41 ES Munger, *Touched by Africa*. (Castle Press, Pasadena, 1983), pp. 298-299.

Munger (who lived in Rondebosch for some time with his wife) indeed wanted to use the house as a vehicle for fostering contact between leading personalities in the various racial and political groups “so we began to invite carefully selected Coloured and Afrikaner leaders to dinner” (thus Munger). Some of the guests were Paul Sauer, a leading member in the National Party and Dr Dick van der Ross, then editor of a ‘Coloured’ newspaper. Neither failed to respond to invitations. Anecdotal evidence, still current among “old-timers”, confirm that invitations to the Munger home were eagerly accepted. One of the survivors of that period remarked to the writer that Munger’s own naturally likable and gregarious nature made for stimulating evenings around his table where prominent American and South African leaders from all sectors of society intermingled.<sup>42</sup>

### **The end of Apartheid**

Munger’s crusade for change in South Africa was a lonely one and beset with controversy. On the one hand his outspoken criticism of racial discrimination under Apartheid tended to make him *persona non-grata* in certain Government circles (in the USA and/or South Africa). There were even attempts to place restrictions on his entry into the country, including outright banning.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand Munger’s vigorous opposition South Africa’s isolation and the imposition of punitive measures, boycotts and economic sanctions against the Apartheid government up in the sixties and later incurred the wrath of those who advocated such measures. Measures to harm the peaceful economic advancement of the country, he pointed out, were counter productive and retarded the growth of democracy. Keeping the country poor made it a breeding ground for discrimination (Munger’s view). Instead Munger advocated and fostered intensive and continued contact and dialogue, building bridges of understanding and spreading the “gospel” of brotherhood. Munger’s stance inevitably brought him in conflict with both sides of the debate on South African affairs then raging here and abroad.<sup>44</sup>

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42 No names are provided because some persons are still in living and maybe sensitive towards using their names without permission.

43 The author is not aware that this matter ever reached the South African Press. It became vaguely known by me as an official during the brief spells when I served in Pretoria. I pleaded his case successfully with Mr Eric Louw. There were however some officials in the security establishment of General van den Berg who continued their opposition.

44 Personal memories of the author.

Throughout the years Munger nevertheless remained optimistic. Munger wrote that he sensed a beginning of that change; that the “hard image of Vorster within South Africa has been tempered by the moderation, pragmatism and outward-looking flexibility he (Vorster) has displayed”. He went on to detail the harbingers of change in attitude and policy and he was encouraged to persist in fostering contact and dialogue. Despite dire predictions of conflagration by some of South Africa’s critics, Munger continued to express confidence in dialogue. He wrote that his projections were: “based upon contemporary domestic developments and trends in foreign policy, point to the possibility of a relatively peaceful transition to a more just South Africa”.<sup>45</sup>

One might well ask what made Munger to assume this missionary role, unasked and often unpopular among both extremes in the controversy. Yet, despite opposition to his efforts from both of the opposing sides, there was a growing body of opinion in South Africa who saw the common sense in his arguments.

Munger was elated when change in the South African situation did come in 1990 with F W de Klerk’s announcement of the end of apartheid. It led him to feel justified in his approach of fostering contact and dialogue and in opposing punitive measures and South Africa’s isolation

## Conclusion

Munger was a purposeful traveller in pursuit of his wide-ranging interests - archaeology, ethnography, art and culture among them. “One of the joys of being a geographer” he said, is: “that the world is my oyster, world travel my most stimulating teacher”.<sup>46</sup> In his travels he liked to meet people and engage them in meaningful conversation. After his retirement he embarked on an ambitious programme of producing and publishing a projected series of five books under the title *Cultures, chess and art; A collector’s odyssey across seven continents*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> EH Munger, “South Africa: Is there a silver lining?”, *American Journal for Foreign Affairs*, January 1969.

<sup>46</sup> Personal memories of the author.

<sup>47</sup> ES Munger & LA Smith (Eds.), *Cultures, chess and art; A collector’s odyssey across seven continents* (Mundial Press, 1998), pp. 224.

At a memorial service to Munger arranged by Caltech in the Athenaeum in Pasadena on 24 June 2010 fifteen notables<sup>48</sup> representing a large cross-section of the many organisations in which Munger was active, family members and two of his Ugandan god-children paid tribute to his outstanding and tireless contributions in the humanitarian field. Among the tributes paid to this remarkable academic missionary in Africa was one by Munger's nephew, Christopher Munger. In the course of his address he read the texts of two letters from Ned's grandfather Edwin Munger, a lawyer and later a judge, addressed to Ned in 1925 and 1926, on respectively his fourth and fifth birthdays. The mere fact that Ned Munger had kept these letters for more than eighty years, shows that he was affected by the homespun values of an old man. Among these his grandfather wrote:

My wish is that you will never feel unequal in meeting opportunities for service.

This injunction may well be a source of Munger's inspiration for selfless service in what he believed in. His educational contributions still lives on.

## **Appendix A**

### **Books by Edwin S Munger**

*Relational Patterns of Kampala, Uganda.* Chicago, 1951 University of Chicago Press.

"Geography of Sub-Saharan Race Relations." In *Africa Today*, edited by C. Grove Haines. 1955. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.

"Africa." In *Select Biography: Asia Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America*, edited by Phillips Talbot. 1960 New York: American Universities Field Staff.

"Liberia's Economic and Human Progress." In *The New Nations of West Africa*, edited by Robert Theobald. 1960 New York: H.W. Wilson Company.

*African Field Reports, (1950-1956)* (Introduction by C.W. de Kiewiet). 1960. Cape Town: Struik.

"Race and National Identification." In *Expectant Peoples: Nationalism and Development*, edited by K.H. Silvert. 1963 New York: Random House.

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<sup>48</sup> Notables from the California Institute of Technology and from a number of organisations in the field of art, theatre, etc. with which Munger had been involved with, recorded his active role during the memorial service.

- Bechuanaland: Pan-African Outpost or Bantu Homeland?* 1965. London, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Notes on the Formation of South African Policy.* Pasadena: 1965 Grant Dahlstrom, Castle Press.
- Afrikaner and African Nationalism.* London: 1967 Oxford University Press.
- Southern Africa and the United States*, with W.A. Hance, Leo Kuper and Vernon McKay. 1968. New York: Columbia University Press.
- “Sanctions in Rhodesia”. In *Africa: The Heritage and the Challenge*, edited by Joan G. Roland. 1974 Fawcett.
- “The Afrikaner as Seen Abroad.” In *Looking at the Afrikaner*, edited by Hendrik W. van der Merwe. 1975. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- “Prognosis: The United States and South Africa.” In *Race and Politics in South Africa*, edited by Ian Robertson and Phillip Whitten. 1978. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- “The Internal Settlement: The View from South Africa.” In *Crisis in Zimbabwe*, edited by Boniface Obichere. 1979. New York: Westview Press.
- The Afrikaners.* 1979. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Touched by Africa.* 1983. Pasadena: Castle Press.
- “Sickle Cell Anemia, Genetic Variations, and the Slave Trade to the United States.” In *Journal of African History* 31 (1990) 163-80.
- Rwanda, A Fascinating Story of Man and Gorilla in Africa's Mountains of the Moon.* 1995. Thompson-Shore.
- Cultures, Chess & Art, A Collector's Odyssey Across Seven Continents, Volume 1, Sub-Saharan Africa.* 1996. Mundial Press. San Anselmo, Cal.
- Cultures, Chess & Art, A Collector's Odyssey Across Seven Continents, Volume 2, The Americas.* 1998. Mundial Press. San Anselmo, Cal.
- Cultures, Chess & Art, A Collector's Odyssey Across Seven Continents, Volume 3, Pacific Islands and Asia.* 2000. Mundial Press. San Anselmo, Cal.

## **Appendix B**

### **South African Nieman Fellows<sup>49</sup> (as in 2009 and in random order)**

Charlotte Bauer *Mail & Guardian*

Stewart Carlyle

Kim Cloete Specialist Journalist - SABC

Kevin Davie *Mail & Guardian*

Salie de Swardt Managing Director – *Media 24*

Fleur de Villiers *Sunday Times*

Ted Doman (retired)

Tim du Plessis Editor-In-Chief: *Rapport*

Barbara Folscher

Paula Fray

Michael Green

Philippa Green

Melanie Gosling Reporter: *The Cape Times*

Tony Heard SA Government

Henry JJ Jeffreys Editor: *Die Burger*

Sebastain Kleu

Joe Latakomo CEO: Kapele Freight and Logistics Services

Thabo J Leshilo Editor: *Sowetan*

Moeletsi Mbeki Chairman: KMM Investments

Lizeka Mda Deputy Editor: *City Press*

John Mojapelo JS Mojapelo Attorneys

Barney Mthombothi Editor: *Financial Mail*

Nat Nakase

Harald Pakendorf Meropa Communication

Denis Pather Editor: *The Mercury*

Brian Pottinger

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<sup>49</sup> Concerning the South African Nieman Fellows: The names of the SA Fellows were supplied to me by The Nieman Society, Johannesburg, October 2010. (e-mail address: niemansa@iafrica.com).

Carmel Rickard Legal Editor: *The Sunday Times*

John Ryan

Jabulani Sikhakhane Editor: Business Report, Independent Newspapers

Gail Smith Editor: City Pulse

Allister Sparks (retired)

Richard Steyn Editors Inc

Joe Thloloe SA Press Ombudsman

Mathatha Tsedu *City Press*

Hennie van Deventer Kernkrag

Dries van Heerden

Sue Valentine

Ton Vosloo NASPERS