

## **Arguments for Neutrality and Nonalignment**

The Warren Unna Newsletters, 1958–1959

### **Project Data**

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### **Abstract**

This is a project in collaboration with the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) for the publication of a critical volume of the “Warren Unna Newsletters.” Unna (1923–2017) was a US American journalist who, from 1958 to 1959, traveled the world with the goal of understanding why some countries in the young Cold War chose to remain uncommitted? His research project at the ICWA, named “Arguments for Neutrality and Non-Alignment,” took him to 24 countries and territories. They included, among others, the most ardent neutralists like India, Indonesia, the United Arab Republic, and Yugoslavia, but also the countries that tried to use neutrality to escape the Vietnam War (Cambodia, Laos, and Burma), and the “traditional” Cold War European neutrals, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and Ireland. Wherever he went, Unna conducted interviews, at times with some of the top politicians of their days, like Austria's Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, or the President of the Philippines, Carlos P. Garcia. Unna's letters are a valuable account of a young American who tried to explore the world between the Great Power blocks by himself. In the process, he recorded the thoughts and arguments of a generation of Cold War protagonists who, even today, remain largely at the margins of history. The project aims at publishing Unna's letters in an annotated version, i.e., containing critical and explanatory commentaries to make his experiences accessible to contemporary readers. The volume makes this valuable source material available to the general public and integrates Unna's account of the nonaligned world at the close of the 1950s into the body of Cold War and Neutrality literature.

## Description

Title: Arguments for Neutrality and Nonalignment

Subtitle: The Warren Unna Newsletters, 1958–1959

This book will contain the collected newsletters that Warren Unna sent back to the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA) between 1958–59, during his fellowship to neutral and nonaligned states. The 35-year-old Unna visited 24 countries (or territories) where he interviewed politicians, journalists, and academics about the reasons for their government’s neutral stances in the Cold War. He recorded his thoughts, impressions, and the extracts of his interviews in 38 lengthy letters, totaling 309 typewritten pages. The letters are highly accessible, thanks to Unna’s light-hearted and witty prose—a testimony to his skills as a newspaper journalist. This astounding travelogue is unique in its scope and frame, making him the only real “eyewitness to neutralism,” something not even the initiators of the Bandung Conference or the representatives of neutral European countries could have claimed since they explicitly kept a distance from each other. Unna is likely the only person of his time who visited and engaged with almost all neutral and nonaligned countries, well before the “N+N” states became an informal group during the CSCE process, in the 1970s, and even before the formal founding of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), in Belgrade, in 1961. Although none of the reports were an in-depth analysis of the various neutralist policies, they represent literary snap-shots—in a birds-eye perspective—of local politics in Asia and Europe. In addition, some of Unna’s interviewees were prime ministers and presidents, giving his accounts more gravity, and making them valuable also for the study of the politics and personalities of the Cold War.

PICTURE 1: Extract of letter WWU-5 with original caption

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EL PRESIDENTE: Garcia of The Philippines tells Unna of Washington that he wants to be friends with everybody. Presidential Press Secretary Joe Nable listens reverently.

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Unna was not an academic. He did not try to explore his research topic in a bookish manner but to experience the world outside the military alliances of the East-West conflict first-hand by listening to the opinions of their leaders and thinkers. Making good use of this year-long paid excursion, his newsletters to the second ICWA director, Richard N. Nolte (“Dear Dick”) also contain stories of visits that were not strictly neutrality related—albeit still of contemporary importance—including Hawaii (shortly before the territory became a state), Hongkong, and Macau. Also Japan was a stop on his tour-du-monde, as a small but vocal neutrality movement in the country gave him an excellent excuse for an excursion to Tokyo. Traveling 4 years before the Cuban Missile Crisis, but 5 years after Stalin’s death and well into the Khrushchev era, a slight first thawing of the Cold War allowed Unna to visit even the USSR for 10 days. Unna was a prolific writer, keeping his letters light-hearted and casual. As a journalist, he was well informed about national and international debates, which he regularly referenced, making his collected letters a historical account of a dynamic moment in world politics.

To make Unna’s letters accessible to contemporary readers, this critical volume will offer further information in annotations, explaining events, places, people, and some of Unna’s more obscure remarks. In addition, an introduction and an epilogue will draw on additional source materials from Unna (letters, notes, photographs) to contextualize his work historically.

### Letter Overview

Number	Country	Sending Date	Pages
WWU 1	Hawaii	1958-12-04	8
WWU 2	Japan	1958-12-08	9
WWU 3	Hong Kong	1958-12-21	16
WWU 4	Macau	1958-12-23	5
WWU 5	The Philippines	1959-01-01	11
WWU 6	Laos	1959-01-07	4
WWU 7	Cambodia	1959-01-16	6
WWU 8	Burma	1959-01-31	11
WWU 9	Nepal	1959-02-12	10
WWU 10	India	1959-03-31	7
WWU 11	India	1959-03-31	8
WWU 12	India	1959-03-31	6
WWU 13	India	1959-03-31	10
WWU 14	India	1959-03-31	10
WWU 15	Malaya & Singapore	1959-04-10	9
WWU 16	Indonesia	1959-06-05	7
WWU 17	Indonesia	1959-06-05	7
WWU 18	Indonesia	1959-06-05	4
WWU 19	Indonesia	1959-06-05	8

## Project Paper (Draft)

Number	Country	Sending Date	Pages
WWU 20	Indonesia	1959-06-05	11
WWU 21	Ceylon	1959-06-15	12
WWU 22	Afghanistan	1959-06-24	11
WWU 23	USSR	1959-07-21	6
WWU 24	USSR	1959-07-22	7
WWU 25	Finland	1959-07-26	8
WWU 26	Sweden	1959-08-05	11
WWU 27	Switzerland	1959-09-05	7
WWU 28	Austria	1959-09-11	4
WWU 29	Austria	1959-09-11	4
WWU 30	Austria	1959-09-11	7
WWU 31	Yugoslavia	1959-10-03	11
WWU 32	Yugoslavia	1959-10-03	7
WWU 33	UAR	1959-11-06	7
WWU 34	UAR	1959-11-06	8
WWU 35	UAR	1959-11-06	4
WWU 36	UAR	1959-11-06	7
WWU 37	Israel	1959-11-15	11
WWU 38	Ireland	1959-11-28	10

### About the Editor

Pascal Lottaz (1985, Fribourg, Switzerland) is Assistant Professor at the Waseda Institute for Advanced Study (Tokyo, Japan), where he researches neutral states in international relations. He received his PhD in 2018, from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (Tokyo). He published on nineteenth-century neutral states, neutrals during the Second World War, and neutrality and nonalignment during the Cold War. His most recent publication is a monograph on “Sweden, Japan, and the Long Second World War” (with Ingemar Ottosson), published by Routledge, in 2021.

### About ICWA

The Institute of Current World Affairs has sent outstanding young women and men abroad to acquire deep knowledge of foreign societies for over 90 years. They have become some of America's leading experts in global cultures and affairs.