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RUSSIA IN *LANDFALL* UNDER CHARLES BRASCH

The literary journal *Landfall* under its founding editor and patron Charles Brasch has been seen as a singularly important vehicle for the development of a sense of New Zealand artistic, literary, and cultural identity during the post-war period from 1947 to 1966. Brasch clearly envisaged an important role for *Landfall* in the development of a national culture, and existing scholarship on the journal has tended to concentrate on this national agenda, in part reflecting the success of Brasch's project.¹ Scholarship to date has as a result tended largely to ignore an equally important factor in the journal under Brasch's editorship: its internationalism, which extended well beyond the appeal to English and European traditions thus far noted.² Evidenced in a number of ways, including his Commonwealth letters and his inclusion of a significant amount of material relating to China, Brasch's internationalist focus in *Landfall* is perhaps most clearly exemplified by the important but generally unacknowledged role of Russia.

It is well known that Brasch had a special interest in Russia. He travelled to Russia in 1934 and later in life, after retiring from the editorship of *Landfall* in 1966, he studied Russian at the University of

¹ For discussions of Brasch's *Landfall* in relation to the creation of a sense of New Zealand arts and culture, see, for example, James Bertram, 'Charles Brasch in Perspective', *Turnbull Library Record* (May 1979): pp. 29–36; John W. Geraets, 'Landfall under Brasch: The Humanizing Journey' (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 1982); David G. H. Anido, 'The Genesis and Development of *Landfall* and Its Influence in Relation to the Culture of New Zealand and the Commonwealth' (PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1972); Lawrence Jones, 'The Making of an Imaginative Order: Charles Brasch's *Landfall*, 1947–66', *Landfall: The Brasch Years, 1947–66* (Dunedin: Hocken Library, 1997), pp. 4–12; and Eleanor J. Ross, 'Charles Brasch, Matthew Arnold, and New Zealand Literary Culture: An Exploration of the Nature and Impact of Brasch's Tastes and Values' (MA thesis, University of Otago, 2004).

² The importance of the appeal to European and especially English traditions in Brasch's cultural nationalist agenda is widely noted, including in Ross's discussion of Brasch and Mathew Arnold (pp. 71–86) and in Hugh Roberts, 'Can Identity be Helped? *Landfall*, Chaos, and the Creation of a New Zealand National Literature', *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 14 (1996): pp. 33–38.

Otago.³ In 1970, he and Peter Soskice published a book of translations of poems by Russian poet Sergey Esenin.⁴ His interest in the communist world in general was enhanced by his close friendships with his former Waitaki Boys' High School classmates Ian Milner and James Bertram, who had close ties to Czechoslovakia and China respectively.

What is less well known is the degree to which Brasch's interest in Russia is reflected in *Landfall*, through his editorials, poetry, essays, and commentaries, correspondence, and reviews that all relate in various ways to Russia. Brasch's frequent references to Russia and his inclusion of Russia-related material demonstrate the central symbolic role the country played in his cultural nationalism and internationalism. Russia had multiple overlapping symbolic values for Brasch. On one level, his inclusion of Russian material and his conciliatory reaching across the Cold War divide between Russia and the West signified his belief in the "unifying . . . power" of culture, its "ability to create a unified sense of the world" and to bring "together things far apart and seemingly indifferent or hostile."⁵ Brasch's references to Russia played a critical role in expressing this belief by transcending the Cold War divide, the single most important geopolitical fact of the era and one that of course had a deep impact on New Zealand society. On another level, Russia symbolised the danger of state control of the arts, a threat that in the early years of the journal was associated in New Zealand in part with aggressive anti-communism, especially during the early 1950s. At a further level, however, Russia provided a model not to be avoided but to be emulated in that, for Brasch, Russia symbolised the possibility of the arts and literature being accorded a central role in society, a role he felt they were largely denied in New Zealand. Thus Russia held a critical place in the journal and in its expression of Brasch's vision of cultural nationalism and internationalism, and of the role of the arts and literature in society, especially in the larger contemporary social and political world of the Cold War. In these ways, we argue that through his editorial notes and the inclusion of material from and

³ See Ian Milner, 'Conversation with Charles Brasch', *Landfall* 25, no. 4 (1971): p. 365; and James McNeish, *Dance of the Peacocks: New Zealanders in Exile in the Time of Hitler and Mao Tse-Tung* (Auckland: Vintage, 2003), pp. 71–72. For Brasch's own account, see the letter he wrote to his father on 29 Sep. 1934 in the Charles Brasch Papers, ms. 0996-010/038, Hocken Library, Dunedin.

⁴ Charles Brasch and Peter Soskice, trans., *Poems*, by Sergei Esenin (Wellington: Waite-ata, 1970).

⁵ Charles Brasch, *The Universal Dance: A Selection from the Critical Prose Writings of Charles Brasch*, ed. J. L. Watson (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1981), pp. 166–167.

about Russia, Brasch's *Landfall* pursued an internationalist form of cultural nationalism, which joined the project of building New Zealand's arts and literature with an internationalist belief in the arts as a uniting force that might transcend the boundaries created by the Cold War.

In addressing the important role of Russia in *Landfall* under Brasch, we aim to contribute to a twofold re-evaluation of New Zealand literature of the period. Firstly, building on the idea that, as Stuart Murray puts it, "we grasp the nature of New Zealand's specific locality more fully when we view it within an international context," we continue the reassessment of New Zealand literary history in the light of the importance of internationalism and international networks that extend beyond the obvious ties to England and notions of a European tradition.⁶ Secondly, we aim to make the case for the importance of the Cold War to New Zealand literary studies. What Jonathan Monroe calls "the oppositional discursive economy" of the Cold War has been recognised in recent years as having played a critical role in the study of US literature.⁷ But the impact of such literary Cold War studies is for the most part yet to be felt here. In a small way, this essay aims to make the case for the critical importance of the Cold War and the discursive structures it imposed to an understanding of New Zealand literature and literary history.

Russia in Brasch's *Landfall* Notes

The 20-year period during which Brasch edited *Landfall* roughly spans the first two turbulent decades of the Cold War. Brasch's concern at the developments of the Cold War can be seen in his 'Notes' for many numbers of *Landfall*—his quarterly comment on affairs at an international and national level and "New Zealand's cultural place in the world."⁸ These 'Notes' supplement our understanding of his vision for a unique New Zealand national identity and culture by pointing to an internationalist agenda, and in particular the importance of Russia and the Cold War to that agenda.

⁶ Stuart Murray, *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998), p. 13.

⁷ Jonathan Monroe, 'Avant-Garde Poetries after the Wall', *Poetics Today* 21, no. 1 (2000): p. 106. Recent discussions of US literature informed by a Cold War perspective include Deborah Nelson, *Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Michael Davidson, *Guys Like Us: Citing Masculinity in Cold War Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁸ James Bertram, *Charles Brasch* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 34.

In the opening lines of his introductory note to the inaugural March 1947 issue of *Landfall*, Brasch clearly outlines two key points that will be critical to the role Russia implicitly and explicitly plays in *Landfall* under his editorship: “*Landfall* is a literary review. Its chief concern is with the arts, of which literature is one. But the arts do not exist in a void. They are products of the individual imagination and at the same time social phenomena; raised above the heat and dust of everyday life, and yet closely implicated in it. Any serious consideration of them is bound to involve an inquiry into their place in society and the social functions which they fulfil—what part they play in life, what use they are. This in turn must lead sooner or later to questions about society itself and what it exists for, and, eventually, about the nature of man.”⁹ In these opening sentences Brasch asserts his belief in the arts as intimately engaged with the particular societies in which they are made but as ultimately transcending political and social divides, providing unity through their common address to the universal “nature of man.” Brasch envisages the arts as “a language of reconciliation”, bridging distances between cultures and thus embodying his vision of cultural unity.¹⁰

In a review of the progress of *Landfall* in its fifth year, Brasch links his initial justification for the combination of social and political commentary with arts and literature and his vision of cultural unity to the Cold War context and to Russia in particular. Quoting the editor of *Meanjin*, he again asserts that *Landfall* “is necessarily concerned with the conditions in which literature is produced”.¹¹ At the same time, he makes a claim for *Landfall*’s role in the production of a unified New Zealand culture, describing the journal’s contents as “a reflection, however fragmentary, of the interests, attitudes, habits of mind and way of life of New Zealanders.”¹² Brasch, however, clearly links this cultural nationalist agenda and insistence of the role of the arts in society to the Cold War divide and Russia. Noting the centrality of the “division of Russia from the West” to recent world history, Brasch describes this division and Russia’s “present . . . mood of strident nationalism” as a consequence of the actions of the West: “As they ostracized Russia and treated her like an outlaw, so in turn the Russians shut off their country against all European influence.”¹³ Brasch appears wary of this brand of nationalism, from which we can infer

⁹ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 1, no. 1 (1947): p. 3.

¹⁰ *Landfall* 1, no. 1, p. 3.

¹¹ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 5, no. 1 (1951): p. 4.

¹² *Landfall* 5, no. 1, p. 4.

¹³ *Landfall* 5, no. 1, pp. 4–5.

his desire for a more internationally focussed sense of unity. He appeals to “European influence” as a source of this cultural unity. The immediate context for Brasch’s references to Russia is the founding of the People’s Republic of China and the subsequent Korean conflict between Chinese and US-led UN forces. “Communist China,” Brasch argues, “needs western help and goodwill today just as Bolshevik Russia needed them after 1917—and it must be insisted that in our ‘one world’, as never before, nations do *need* one another, both materially and spiritually . . . if the West is hostile, China will be forced to depend entirely on Russia. Which is of course the surest way of dividing East and West more deeply.”¹⁴

Brasch’s remarks demonstrate the significance of his references to Russia as a way of signifying his critical beliefs in the relationship between the arts and wider society and in the arts and culture as a force that could transcend and heal divides, including the central geopolitical divide of the era. By placing these remarks alongside his discussion of the New Zealand focus of *Landfall* and its inclusion of social and political texts alongside arts and literature, Brasch also implies a crucial connection between his internationalist address and attempts to transcend the Cold War divide and his nationalist cultural agenda with its blending of the artistic and political.

The increasing sense of the inseparability of the national and the international in the early Cold War period that Brasch acknowledges here is evident in the contemporaneous 1951 waterfront confrontation and the rise of communism in the Asia Pacific, notably through the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 and the Korean War that was currently taking place and in which New Zealand soldiers were engaged, all of which was supported by the rise of anti-communist rhetoric within New Zealand, deployed successfully by the National Party in their 1951 election victory.

His discussion of Russia and China and their relationship to the West can thus be read as a direct response to the heightened Cold War rhetoric, suggesting that *Landfall*’s cultural project was intimately connected to the Cold War situation and offered an alternative to its divisiveness. Brasch’s implicit response to the endangerment of the liberty of writers and artists is taken up more directly the following year in Bill Pearson’s essay ‘Fretful Sleepers’, which Brasch included in *Landfall*. Pearson’s essay, like Brasch’s note, suggests a strategy of internationalism and opposition to the xenophobia to which the discursive structures of them and us in the Cold War appealed: “The untrustworthy are the people one doesn’t have direct

¹⁴ *Landfall* 5, no. 1, p. 5.

contact with—the watersiders, for example, seen through the polemic of Mr Holland’s radio turns and the daily press—or foreigners: a foreign tongue sets a New Zealander’s nerves on edge, he feels the speaker is deliberately taunting his incomprehension.”¹⁵

Brasch continued to use his introductory notes to address and oppose the international divisiveness and bellicosity of the Cold War. For example, in *Landfall* 12, no. 1, he comments on the growing threat of nuclear war: “The present leaders of the great powers, while protesting almost day by day their blameless wish for security and peace, their desire simply to defend their people, are instead doing their blind utmost to bring the whole world to irreparable destruction.”¹⁶ Brasch attacks the development of nuclear bombs and the governments building them, beginning with: “The force of Lord Acton’s unforgettable remark that ‘Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’ is being made apparent today in dramatic form.”¹⁷ Significantly, Brasch sees New Zealand as a potential voice of reason in the Cold War: “It may be that this country has no power, but it has a voice; and every voice raised for sanity and realism may help to tip the balance against war, towards survival and peace.”¹⁸ Brasch’s remarks anticipate how New Zealand’s anti-nuclear policy became a source of nationalist pride decades later, thus suggesting how his cultural nationalist vision of transcending the Cold War divide resonates with the subsequent development of New Zealand nationalist identity.

Brasch’s ‘Notes’ also refer to contemporary Russian writers and artists in order to appeal to his concept of art’s unifying force. For example, he describes Maurice Shadbolt’s article on his travels in Russia as “enlarg[ing] our knowledge of the conditions under which writers work in Russia today, and of their long courageous struggle for freedom of expression.”¹⁹ This appeal to Russia again leads him to assert the unifying force of literature: “The freedom of writers in one country is the intimate concern of writers in every other country.”²⁰

Russia serves as a symbolic figure not only for the unifying power of literature but also for the critical importance of literature and the writer to

¹⁵ Bill Pearson, ‘Fretful Sleepers’, *Landfall* 6, no. 3 (1952): p. 220.

¹⁶ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 12, no. 1 (1958): p. 3.

¹⁷ *Landfall* 12, no. 1, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Landfall* 12, no. 1, p. 5.

¹⁹ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 12, no. 2 (1958): pp. 99–103.

²⁰ *Landfall* 12, no. 2, p. 99.

society. Thus Brasch writes: “In Russia especially, but in France and England too, in America, and even in New Zealand, it has been one of the traditional roles of the imaginative writer to serve as the conscience of his people.”²¹ The suppression of writers is indeed a grave prospect to Brasch, severely limiting his aspirations for internationalist culture to grow. Russia serves as the primary example of this threat both to New Zealand and international cultural unity and as the leading example of culture being accorded a central role in society, a role to which Brasch’s *Landfall* aspires.²²

Brasch’s concern for the conditions of writers continues in 1960, when he discusses the tribulations of the late Boris Pasternak and his *Dr Zhivago*:

Pasternak was made to suffer appallingly for the specious popularity thrust upon him in the west. He was turned into an archetype of the writer as scapegoat, representing all those writers whom the state murdered obscurely or who took their lives because it had made life intolerable for them. It was in the Russian tradition. He had been prepared, indeed. Yet his extraordinary endurance and survival give him claims on our respect and gratitude which few writers have earned. He redeemed not himself alone, but the many writers who suffered unjustly before him.²³

Brasch’s description of Pasternak’s plight recalls his earlier appeals to Russia. Here again he chastises the West and political repression of writers within Russia in order to advance his vision of literature transcending politics. Equally, his citation of the dangers facing writers in Russia, allows him to emphasise the universal importance of literature through an example of the hardships writers will endure for the sake of their art.

In the last years of his editorship, Brasch increasingly refers to Russia in order to criticise its use of “the arts as a social lubricant, part of the propaganda machine,” its “attempt to make the artist a mere social functionary,” which “would, if they succeeded—which in the long run they cannot—both kill art and ruin society.” Brasch notes that the “Russians

²¹ *Landfall* 12, no. 2, p. 101.

²² On the problematic desire of Brasch and his contemporaries to close the gap between art and society, see Wystan Curnow, ‘High Culture in a Small Province’, *Essays on New Zealand Literature*, ed. Wystan Curnow (Auckland: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 155–171.

²³ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 14, no. 3 (1960): p. 220.

have done their worst in this line, with incalculable damage and impoverishment to themselves and mankind. Hitherto they have resisted or suppressed works of art which might in any way imply criticism of their social system and of the day-to-day infallibility of their ludicrous party line and their despotic ephemeral politicians.”²⁴ Similarly, two years later in his penultimate issue, Brasch writes that “Russian governments have always treated a work of art as a public statement overtly or potentially political, the act of a citizen or member of organized society”, citing Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s statement that “All the tyrants in Russia have taken the poets as their worst enemies. They feared Pushkin. They trembled before Lermontov. They were afraid of Nekrasov.”²⁵ In both cases, the references to Russia serve to underscore the danger of political interference in the arts and, equally, the role of the arts as the lifeblood of society. For it is in societies like Russia, and implicitly unlike New Zealand, that “intellectual society . . . recognizes a work of art as being a public statement.”²⁶ Equally, Russia demonstrates not only art’s centrality to society but also its role as a source of resistance to the social order: “Tacitly or explicitly, all art criticizes the social order. The social function of the arts is always to change that order, whether radically or subtly: never simply to confirm the injustices and banalities of the status quo.”²⁷ Thus Russia provides simultaneously a cautionary example and a model to be followed.

This characteristic use of Russia to make the case for the independence of art and simultaneously for its central role in society leads Brasch in both cases to make a connection with New Zealand. In the 1964 note, Brasch discusses a new Russian selection of New Zealand short stories, which he describes as “rather more tolerant than might have been expected,” but in which nevertheless “political ideology overruled literary judgment in the choice of stories.”²⁸ The collection serves not just as an example of politics negatively impinging on literature, but also to suggest again Brasch’s sense of a cultural unity, albeit one impeded by politics, so that he describes this instance of Russia paying attention to New Zealand literature as “flattering.”²⁹ Thus Brasch not only criticises Russian oppression of writers but through this appeal to the Russian example asserts the power of art and its international unity.

²⁴ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 18, no. 3 (1964): p. 199.

²⁵ Charles Brasch, ‘Notes’, *Landfall* 20, no. 3 (1966): p. 215.

²⁶ *Landfall* 20, no. 3, p. 215.

²⁷ *Landfall* 18, no. 3, p. 199.

²⁸ *Landfall* 18, no. 3, p. 200.

²⁹ *Landfall* 18, no. 3, p. 200.

In 1966, Brasch uses the recognition of art as central to society in Russia as a foil to what he calls, quoting Terry Sturm, the “obvious gap in New Zealand between literature and the life of society”. Thus Brasch implies that Russian intellectual society is one that “Culture as such in New Zealand” must emulate if it is to overcome this gap and wear the “recognizably New Zealand face” that, according to Brasch, it still lacks.³⁰ Thus Russia still remains the figure for Brasch’s unfulfilled desire for the creation of a national culture even after what he refers to as his “Twenty Years Hard” work to make *Landfall* what Patrick Evans would later call a “bastion of high culture.”³¹

Russia in Brasch’s *Landfall* Selections

As in the editorial notes, in the selections he made for the journal, Brasch demonstrates the importance of an internationalist outlook and the Cold War other to *Landfall*. Over the 20 years that Brasch edited *Landfall*, the inclusiveness of the work he chose to publish can be read as an implicit expression of the notion of a shared or unified culture. Brasch frequently included material that crossed the Cold War divide and thus opposed the conservative consensus that guarded this division within New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s. His inclusions were not limited to Russia. For example, he included translations and essays by Ian Milner at a time when he was still being treated as persona non grata by some New Zealand universities and elements of the media.³² Brasch’s vision of a unified culture, his preoccupation with the relationship between art and society, and his emphasis on internationalism as the necessary concomitant of cultural internationalism are reflected and played out most strikingly in the selections from or relating to Russia.

As propounded in Brasch’s first editorial, *Landfall* was never a purely literary journal. Accordingly, Brasch had the opportunity to publish a breadth of commentary and opinion pieces on politics, travel, world issues, and the arts, including essays discussing Russia and the political climate of the day. Willis Airey’s ‘Liberalism is not Enough: A Study in World

³⁰ *Landfall* 20, no. 3, p. 216.

³¹ Charles Brasch, ‘Twenty Years Hard: The Perils of Editing’, *The Universal Dance*, ed. J. L. Watson (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1981), pp. 182–185; and Patrick Evans, “Pakeha-style biculturalism” and the Maori writer’, *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 24, iss. 1: p. 17.

³² See McNeish, *Dance of the Peacocks*, pp. 315–325.

Crisis', which appeared in the first issue, is an important example of this latter genre. The inclusion of Airey's essay in the first issue is significant since Airey, whose Marxism had intensified in the 1930s and early 1940s, was a prominent proponent of friendship with Russia and opposed the Cold War divide as a capitalist concoction, a position that led to his being attacked in parliament and in newspaper editorials. As Barry Gustafson notes in March 1947, about the time of the publication of the first issue of *Landfall*, "Harry Truman told the United States Congress . . . that the world was being divided between democracy and totalitarianism."³³ Recognising the importance of this emerging Cold War divide internationally and to New Zealand, Airey writes:

In these islands, conditioned by our own productive climate and a past immunity from the immediate effects of war, we have carried over into the twentieth century an overdose of Victorian optimism and something of the Victorian reluctance to face the facts. It is an outlook on the world no longer possible in Europe or Asia; it should no longer be possible for us.³⁴

The rejection of a Victorian attitude can be seen in the contemporaneous "critical modernism" of Allen Curnow and others, suggesting a link between this shift within New Zealand culture and the international climate of the Cold War. Like Pearson in 'Fretful Sleepers', Airey describes the West as somehow sick in contrast to the vibrancy of the East. While, like Pearson, Airey attacks New Zealanders' complacency, he dispels any romantic notions readers may hold about the state of Communist Bloc policy. "The U.S.S.R. is indeed not the paradise of sweet reasonableness that the intellectual cherisher of western liberal values pines for," Airey says, acknowledging that "Ugly, as well as glorious, things have happened in the border countries of Eastern Europe."³⁵ These comments resonate with Brasch's own statements about Russia, which describe the country both as a symbol of artistic repression and of artistic vitality, an example to be emulated in the important social role of the artist and its breaking out of the shackles of European and Western domination, even as it draws on these traditions. Airey ends his essay on a note of foreboding, enunciating

³³ Barry Gustafson, 'New Zealand in the Cold War World', *Lenin's Legacy Down Under: New Zealand's Cold War*, ed. Alexander Trapeznik and Aaron Fox (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004), p. 21.

³⁴ Willis Airey, 'Liberalism is not Enough: A Study in World Crisis', *Landfall* 1, no. 2 (1947): p. 105.

³⁵ Airey, 'Liberalism is not Enough', p. 113.

his fear of the conflict escalating into another world war: “it is ostrich-like to ignore the potential trends towards a third world struggle. Too easily can one picture the liberals of the West rallying their peoples once more to fight for freedom, democracy, justice, and the rights of small nations.”³⁶ This statement gives a sense of just how fearful people were of aggression intensifying, and consequently supports Brasch’s interest in supporting an internationalist view of Communist nations to promote a fuller understanding.

To accompany essays of this nature that addressed Russia in the context of the Cold War, Brasch, in 1952, published Geoffrey Ryan’s translation of Alexander Pushkin’s ‘The Monument’. This first instance of Russian poetry in *Landfall* could be read as implicitly addressing Brasch’s central concerns regarding the relationship of art to politics. Firstly, the choice of Pushkin, Russia’s national poet, and symbol of a nation that values poetry and ‘culture’ greatly, is significant, in the climate of the early 1950s. As Michael King notes, “Anxieties about communist expansion, especially in South-east Asia, also underlay the Government’s decision in 1951 to join the ANZUS defence pact with the United States and Australia.”³⁷ In 1952 the US had just launched the world’s first nuclear submarine, and the UK was preparing to become the world’s third nuclear power. The Korean War continued, and the National Party had just won an election based on its anti-communist rhetoric and aggressive response to the workers involved in the 1951 waterside dispute. Brasch’s decision to publish Russia’s national poet at a moment when tension between the Soviet Union and the West was high and the Cold War conflict’s impact on New Zealand’s domestic politics was palpable opposed the bellicose rhetoric on both sides by reminding readers that Russia was not only the Cold War enemy but a nation that highly valued its culture and literary tradition. Thus Brasch implied that a sense of cultural unity might overcome the Cold War divide. Moreover, Pushkin’s ‘The Monument’ is itself a declaration of the power of the arts to overcome the contingencies of history, asserting the immortality of the author’s work as a “monument”, as a “song” that “Endures”, far outlasting any political regimes, conflicts, and repression.³⁸

³⁶ Airey, ‘Liberalism is not Enough’, p. 116.

³⁷ Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003), p. 424.

³⁸ Geoffrey Ryan, trans., ‘The Monument: from the Russian of Pushkin’, *Landfall* 6, no. 3 (1952): p. 192.

Maurice Shadbolt's account of his trip to Russia published in *Landfall* in 1958 also resonates with Brasch's appeals to Russia, engaging the same concepts of cultural unity and the relationship between literature and politics in the context of the post-Stalin thaw. Like Brasch and others published in *Landfall*, Shadbolt attacks the divisions of the Cold War and attempts to bridge the divide. He argues that "the changes in the Soviet Union since 1953" are "little of our doing—that is, little of the doing of the unconcerned, largely abdicated intellectuals of the West who for too long have been suspicious of contact with their Soviet colleagues."³⁹ For Shadbolt, "The new 'individual discontent' has sprung from the peoples and intellectuals of the Soviet Union itself, without help, without much sympathy".⁴⁰ Equally, while expressing his hope for change, Shadbolt associates Russia strongly with the threat to art and literature from political interference and repression, noting the "Krushchev report on art and literature, with its implied threat of a return to the bad old days,"⁴¹ and the domination of the "party line, in the official atmosphere" of a festival he attended, which underscores for him that "Soviet writers were not the Soviet Government."⁴²

Like Brasch, Shadbolt implicitly links the struggle of Russian writers and their strong belief in the importance of literature to *Landfall*'s cultural nationalist project of manufacturing a New Zealand literature. Shadbolt writes of finding himself in Russia repeatedly asked to talk about "the problems of the developing native literature in New Zealand" and connects this to the fact that the Russians' "interest in the development of a national literature—strange, after all, for I *had* come to the land of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Chekhov—was genuine and very real."⁴³ Shadbolt thus implies both a shared sense of a unifying cultural project and the importance of Russian literature as an example to be emulated.

In the final year of his editorship, Brasch published another important Russian poet. The selection of Josef Brodsky's poems, translated by Russian-born University of Otago academic Nicholas Zissermann, was one of the first by this important young poet to appear in the West. By publishing a contemporary poet who had suffered for his dissent at the

³⁹ Maurice Shadbolt, 'China, Russia, Bulgaria: A Journey', *Landfall* 12, no. 2 (1958): p. 138.

⁴⁰ Shadbolt, 'China, Russia, Bulgaria', p. 138.

⁴¹ Shadbolt, 'China, Russia, Bulgaria', p. 138.

⁴² Shadbolt, 'China, Russia, Bulgaria', p. 129.

⁴³ Shadbolt, 'China, Russia, Bulgaria', p. 127.

hands of Soviet authorities, Brasch not only again linked Russia to the dangers of political control of literature and the arts but also once more appealed to the important role played by writers and artists in the country and Russian literature's expression of Brasch's sense of the unifying power of literature. In poems such as 'The Pilgrims', a "mild, almost stoical resignation and acceptance" adds to the sense, like in Pushkin, of art engaging with but overcoming politics, with the lines:⁴⁴

Suns will set over the earth.
Suns will rise over the earth.

Soldiers will fertilize it.
Poets will affirm it.

The essay following the poems gives details of the difficulties Brodsky was experiencing as a writer under the Communist regime in Russia, recounting his time in a prison camp, sentenced to five years of corrective labour in 1964 "on a charge of refusing to work and being a parasite".⁴⁵ By including examples of Russian writers such as Brodsky telling of 'universal truths' (suggested by lines such as "Suns will rise over the earth"), in spite of the communist regime's attempts to silence him, Brasch conveys a strong sense of solidarity and cultural unity internationally, enhancing the implicit internationalist agenda of *Landfall*.

Brasch's decision to include so many items relating to Russia in itself indicates a culturally internationalist agenda and a sense of, or desire for, international cultural unity. The particular works included, moreover, demonstrate a preoccupation with the problem of the relationship between art, society, and politics and a belief in art as a force that may transcend the sphere of politics, unify cultures, and so heal the Cold War divide.

Brasch's Russia in *Landfall*'s Cultural Nationalism

Russia in the Cold War context played an important but previously unrecognised role in *Landfall* under Brasch, a role that relates to his pursuit of an internationalist cultural nationalist agenda, his conception of international cultural unity, his desire for a central role for literature and the

⁴⁴ Nicholas Zissermann, 'Yosif Brodsky', *Landfall* 20, no. 2 (1966): p. 154; Yosif Brodsky, 'The Pilgrims', trans. Nicholas Zissermann, *Landfall* 20, no. 2 (1966): p. 151.

⁴⁵ Zissermann, 'Yosif Brodsky', p. 155.

arts in society, and his equal wariness of political interference. Indeed, the role played by Russia in *Landfall* demonstrates how Brasch's desire to establish a sense of New Zealand's own cultural nationalism was inseparable from his concept of culture as an internationally unifying force that might transcend the boundaries created by the Cold War. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the critical place of Russia in Brasch's thinking as an example of the importance of the arts to society and the dangers they faced from political repressions, dangers that seemed to threaten at home as well as abroad, especially during the early years of the Cold War.

By approaching Brasch's *Landfall* in relation to the Cold War, we have pointed to the internationalist aspects of Brasch's cultural agenda in the hope this will encourage further research into this largely ignored dimension of Brasch's editorial policy. Equally, recognition of the place of Russia in Brasch's *Landfall* suggests the importance of research into New Zealand literature of the period that recognises the crucial role of the Cold War and the forms of discourse it imposed on writers. Reconsideration of the journal in relation to Russia suggests the need for New Zealand literary studies to adopt the very internationalist perspective on New Zealand literature that half a century ago Brasch in *Landfall* sought to foster.