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Tobi Lopez Taylor

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Politics and Pedigrees: America's Cold War–Era Arabian Horse Registration Debacle

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Between 1963 and 1965, the first seven Soviet Russian–bred Arabians arrived in the US. Only one of these horses—the well-known Naborr—was accepted for registration at that time by the Arabian Horse Club Registry of America (AHCRA). The remainder were denied registration for various reasons, stated and unstated, including issues with their paperwork, questions about the “purity” of their bloodlines, and the trustworthiness of Russians. In 1978, the AHCRA finally lifted the ban. This paper examines how changing attitudes toward Russia influenced Americans’ views of Russian Arabians, culminating in a Russian-bred stallion being named 1980 US and Canadian National Champion Stallion.

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1. Introduction

In 1980, a Russian-bred Arabian stallion named Muscat, imported to the United States by well-known breeder Howard Kale Jr., was the first to win the Arabian “triple crown”: in the same year, he was named US National Champion Stallion, Canadian National Champion Stallion, and Champion Stallion of the prestigious Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show. Such a feat would have been unthinkable in 1963, when the first Soviet Russian–bred Arabians were imported by Americans. The Arabian Horse Club Registry of America (AHCRA) had not registered a Russian Arabian since before the Russian Revolution.² To illustrate how little Americans knew about Russian Arabians in the 1960s, an AHCRA governing member and experienced breeder, Dr. Eugene LaCroix, recalled that, until his trip to Poland in 1962—when he saw horses that had been purchased by Poland from the USSR—he “was not aware of the purebred breeding program in Russia.”³

The AHCRA had a list of acceptable studbooks, including those of Poland and England, that conferred automatic registration, but Russia was not on it. One of the seven Russian Arabians, the well-known stallion Naborr, was immediately eligible for registration in the US because of his previous registration in Poland’s studbook. The six others fell into the

¹ Independent Scholar, USA.

² This was the stallion Gounciad (AHCRA registration no. 21), born in 1889 at the Imperial Streletsky Stud. He was shipped to the US to be shown at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He left no purebred offspring.

³ Mary Jane Parkinson and Gladys Brown Edwards, “Dr. Eugene LaCroix: An Interview,” *Arabian Horse World Magazine* April (1983): 198.

“discretionary” category: “they needed supporting documentation to prove their purity, and the directors of the association had the power to accept or reject such documentation.”⁴ The two owners who pressed hardest for registration of their imports, Ed Tweed and Barbara Sedwitz, spent two years providing documentation from Russia, including paperwork from its Ministry of Agriculture, that they hoped would satisfy the AHCRA board.

TRANSLATION OF THE RUSSIAN PEDIGREE CERTIFICATE

page one

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OF U.S.S.R.

Pedigree Certificate

TULPAN

Colour Grey Sex Colt

Breed Arab Born 1958

page two

TULPAN

(name)

Brand No. 6 Sex Colt

Arab Breed pure bred Ancestry

Grey Colour, Markings Star with blaze on forehead, spot of flesh colour between nostrils penetrating into left nostril, both forelegs above pastern, 2/3 of cannon from inside and 1/2 canon of both hind are irregularly white.

Born May 6th 1958

at Stud Farm The Terek Stud

Mineralovodsky District Stavropolsky Province

No. 501 PEDIGREE REGISTRATION No.

Date May 16th 1961

Fig. 1. Tulpan's Russian pedigree certificate provided to the AHCRA in 1963.
Courtesy of Barbara Sedwitz.

In 1965, just before she gave up on registering her horse, Sedwitz was told that the “inaccuracies and insufficiencies of Russian documents that have received the Registry’s

⁴ Margaret E. Derry, *Bred for Perfection: Shorthorn Cattle, Collies, and Arabian Horses Since 1800* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 139–140.

attention” justified the AHCRA’s decision to decline her horse’s registration application (Fig. 1).⁵ A decade later, when Americans traveled to Russia to tour its state-run breeding farm, they at last had the opportunity to see its voluminous studbooks and records. Arabian breed authority Gladys Brown Edwards, who visited Tersk Stud in 1974, “declared the farm stud books the most complete and detailed records she had ever seen. When the current Russian stud book was started in 1965, the pedigree of each horse was checked and any horses that could not be traced in every line to the desert or to stud books of other registries was eliminated.”⁶

It was not until 1978 that the AHCRA lifted its ban on Russian Arabians and retroactively allowed the registration of all of the 1960s imports. This was in great measure due to the efforts by Kale, his associate Robert Stratmore, and other Russian horse fanciers. By then, one of the 1960s imports had already died and the others ranged in age from seventeen to twenty-three. Using recently obtained primary documents, this paper will discuss the AHCRA’s stated and unstated rationale for not registering the majority of these individuals; present an assessment of each of the imports; outline the unintended consequences that arose from not registering them; and examine how changes in American attitudes toward Russia over a fifteen-year period influenced the US Arabian community’s perception of Russian-bred horses.

2. Tersk Stud

In the 1920s, after the Russian Revolution, the Soviet government established a purebred Arabian breeding program at Tersk Stud, in the northern Caucasus. Over the years, the program has employed the bloodlines of Arabians from England, France, Hungary, Poland, and Egypt. Beginning in 1955, Tersk-bred Russian Arabians were exported to various countries.

In the 1950s, Poland purchased Russian Arabians to help rebuild its state-run breeding program after its decimation during World War II. One of those purchases was a Russian stallion originally named Nabor (better known today by the American spelling Naborr). Born in 1950, Naborr was by the Tersk-bred stallion Negativ, whose sire, Naseem, a son of the highly influential Polish stallion, Skowronek, had been imported to Tersk from England, and whose dam, Taraszcza, a mare bred in Poland, had been confiscated by the Soviets. Naborr’s dam, Lagodna, born in 1939, was also bred in Poland. She first fell into the hands of the Germans, who used her in the breeding of Trakehners. Lagodna was later taken to Tersk, where she produced three colts and a filly. Naborr was her only foal to be used for breeding.

After winning two of eight races, Naborr was evaluated according to the Tersk grading system, which took into account his pedigree, measurements, conformation, and performance. He was rated Class I, one class below Elite, the top grade. At the 1954 All-Union Agricultural Exhibition, held in Moscow, Naborr’s sire Negativ was named Champion, while Naborr was awarded the Certificate of the First Degree (i.e., Reserve Champion). Naborr sired a total of nine foals at Tersk; of these, a colt named Santim was his only race winner, and another colt, King, was Naborr’s only offspring used for breeding in the USSR. (King was sent to Azerbaijan to stand at stud, where he sired only one purebred Arabian foal.) In the mid-1950s, when Polish breeding officials inquired about buying Arabians from Tersk to help replenish the bloodlines they had lost during the war years, Naborr was offered for sale. He had not proved to be a good fit in the Tersk program, which prioritized racing ability

⁵ Daniel C. Gainey to Edward C. Friedberg, 21 March 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁶ Mary Jane Parkinson, “Tersk Stud,” in *Foundation Breeders Series III* (Templeton, CA: Arabian Horse World, n.d.), 58.

and precocity, traits not generally found in his offspring. Furthermore, Naborr's sire Negativ was then in early middle age, and he still had time to sire a son that was more in line with Tersk's breeding goals. In 1956, ten Russian Arabians, including Naborr, were exported to Poland, where they were registered in the Polish Studbook and used for purebred breeding.

Naborr initially stood at Albigowa State Stud, and his first Polish-bred foals were born in 1957. This crop, containing seven foals, included a Polish Derby winner, a colt who later became a British champion, a filly who went on to produce two Polish Derby winners, and another filly whose offspring included a US National Champion Park Horse (Amateur Owner to Ride). This was quite an improvement over his breeding record at Tersk, and it only got better once he was moved in 1957 to Michalow State Stud, directed by Ignacy Jaworowski, which had mares by the esteemed Polish stallion Amurath Sahib. These mares' "long necks, strong conformation, and very good top line gave excellent results when blended with the unique beauty of Nabor."⁷ Another director of a Polish state stud, Roman Pankiewicz, was less taken with Naborr, writing that the "first, stunning impression he made was marred by the weak and rounded croup, scant dryness [refinement] and hairy heels. He was also a poor mover....[However,] through his daughters, Nabor exerted a substantial influence on Polish breeding and can certainly be considered an esteemed chief sire."⁸ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, while Naborr was making his mark on Polish breeding, American breeders were becoming aware of the renewed breeding activities in Poland.

3. The 1960s "Polish Invasion"

By the early 1960s, Polish horses were commonly found in American pedigrees. General J. M. Dickinson, of Tennessee, had made two importations of Arabians from Poland in 1937–1938, and Henry B. Babson, of Illinois, had imported some Polish Arabians in 1938. Even earlier, American breeders like W. K. Kellogg, in California, and Roger Selby, in Ohio, had purchased offspring of the Polish-bred stallion Skowronek—including the well-known Raffles and Raseyn—from British breeder Judith Blunt-Lytton (Lady Wentworth), owner of Crabbet Arabian Stud in Sussex.⁹ However, no Arabians born in Poland had been imported to the US since the end of the Second World War, when influential horses such as Witez II, Lotnik, and Iwonka III (granddam of the famous stallion Bask) arrived as war booty. Poland was now a Soviet satellite country, and the US and the USSR were in the midst of a Cold War. Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe after World War II fueled many Americans' fears of a Russian plan to control the world. Keeping Communism at bay was a major theme in US foreign policy for decades.

Gladys Brown Edwards, of California (Fig. 2), happened to read a 1958 article in the UK's *Arab Horse Society News* titled "Arabian Breeding in Poland," by a young British breeder named

⁷ Ignacy Jaworowski, "Poland Speaks: The Director of the National Michalow Stud Writes of *Naborr and His Progeny," in **Naborr*, by Peg Johnson (n.p.: Crownco Publishing, 1976), 40.

⁸ Roman Pankiewicz, *Register of Polish Purebred Arabian Stallions Used for Breeding Between the Years 1944 and 1993* (Szczecin: Polgres, 1999), 117.

⁹ Skowronek—bred in Poland at the Antoniny Stud and imported to England in 1913 to be an artist's model by sculptor, author, and Olympian Walter Winans—is the subject of a controversy over the purity of his bloodlines (e.g., Margaret Derry, *Bred for Perfection*, 149). It should be noted that this controversy in no way influenced the US ban on Russian Arabians, because all of the registries involved (in the US, USSR, and UK) considered Skowronek a purebred Arabian (and still do). Daniel C. Gainey, who was the AHCR president when the Russian horses arrived, had built his breeding program on Skowronek's bloodlines, as had others on the registry's board. Naborr himself was a male-line descendant of Skowronek.

Patricia Lindsay, who was fluent in Polish and made multiple horse-buying trips to Poland. Until then, Edwards had not realized that Arabians were still being bred in Poland. She learned that “not only were there fine individuals of the breed in that country but that it was also possible to buy them, since some had already been exported to England.”¹⁰ Edwards apparently mentioned the Polish horses to her compatriot Herbert H. Reese, an Arabian breeder and author, who was interested in importing a Polish stallion. She recalled that Lindsay sent her pictures and notes on the various horses for sale. Soon, a number of California breeders were using Lindsay and Edwards’s services to select and import Polish horses, a venture the two women jocularly called “The Threadbare Import Company.” Among the well-known breeders to import Polish horses in those early years were John Rogers, Frisco Mari, Sheila Varian, and Janice Rust (later Garrard).

Fig. 2. Arabian authority Gladys Brown Edwards and breeder Ed Tweed were among the first Americans to recognize the value of Russian Arabian horses.
Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

Edwards noted that the political climate of the time affected the logistics of importing some Polish horses:

The Polish horses had been purchased by Miss Lindsay for her clients and since political forces were in a bit of an upheaval at the time, they were shipped to England rather than directly shipped to America. There they were joined by two others and shipped to the United States by different routes—part went directly to New York and were vanned across the country [to California], the others took the scenic route through the Panama Canal up to the Port of Los Angeles. All arrived in fine fettle and excellent shape, which is more than can be said for a number of later sea voyages.¹¹

The worst of the sea voyages transporting Polish horses to America was also the most consequential in terms of its cargo. In late 1962, Dr. Eugene LaCroix and his son Gene

¹⁰ Gladys Brown Edwards, *The Arabian: War Horse to Show Horse* (Covina: Rich Publishing, 1973), 138.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 138.

LaCroix Jr., of Scottsdale's Lasma Arabians, traveled with Dr. Howard Kale and his son Howard Kale Jr. to Poland to shop for horses. They had already seen some of the early Polish imports that were already in Scottsdale. In *Lasma in Retrospect*, Mary P. DeMarzo wrote of the trip that

Dr. Kale particularly wanted to go to England; Dr. LaCroix particularly wanted to go to Poland. They did both. Poland was frightening at that time. It was behind "The Iron Curtain," and the travelers were prepared for the worst. Although they were the first American buyers actually to go there since the 1930s, there had been prior trips. Dr. LaCroix's friend Alice Payne [owner of the stallions Raffles and Raseyn] had been to Poland. She had found the experience a very pleasant one; so, happily, did they.¹²

LaCroix and Kale were impressed by the horses they were shown, and wound up buying several of them. In January 1963, the first of two importations of their purchases left Poland via freighter, bound for New York City. Among the precious cargo on board this ship were LaCroix's new acquisition, Bask, at that time an unknown seven-year-old stallion who had yet to sire a foal, and Naborr, who was then thirteen years old. Both would become household names among American breeders. Naborr's new owner was LaCroix's neighbor in Scottsdale, Anne McCormick, a wealthy breeder of cattle and horses. When LaCroix suggested that she import a son of Naborr, she reportedly remarked, "Why not buy the father instead of the son?" She was then informed that Naborr was not for sale at any price. This formidable woman, who was always accustomed to having her own way, simply kept increasing her offer until the Poles said yes—and they finally did.¹³

4. The First Seven Russian Imports

Naborr arrived at his new owner's 4,000-acre Scottsdale ranch in the spring of 1963 to little fanfare, despite being the first Russian-bred Arabian to be registered by the AHCRA since 1913. The stallion was inspected by an officer of the registry and given registration number 25472. Soon, members of the tight-knit Scottsdale Arabian coterie came by to see McCormick's new horse. One of these neighbors was the previously mentioned Ed Tweed, whose Brusally Ranch was the home of the champion stallion Skorage. In the 1950s, the Tweed, McCormick, and Wrigley families had helped put Scottsdale on the map when they'd established the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show. Tweed also owned a champion son of Naborr—Faraon—who had arrived in the US a year before his sire had.

In late March 1963, after Naborr had arrived, Tweed sent his trainer Steve Spalding on a six-week horse-buying trip to Holland, England, and Poland. After receiving a crash course in Polish bloodstock from Patricia Lindsay, the thirty-year-old Spalding purchased fourteen Arabians for Tweed from Poland, including a son and daughter of Naborr. During his time in England, Spalding made the acquaintance of many well-known breeders, such as H. Musgrave Clark, Cecil Covey, Lady Anne Lytton (daughter of Lady Wentworth), and Margaret Evans. The latter two women had become interested in Russian-bred Arabians, the first of which had been imported into England the previous year. Spalding wrote to Tweed, "If I don't go with Pat Lindsay to see the Russia Arabs tomorrow, I am invited to lunch with Mr. Clark at the Savoy Hotel. There are several excellent Russian Arabs in the country, so I am told, and

¹² Mary P. DeMarzo, *Lasma In Retrospect* (Scottsdale, AZ: Lasma Arabians, 1983), 16.

¹³ Peg Johnson, **Naborr* (n.p.: Crownco Publishing, 1976), 47.

I think I should see them.”¹⁴ Spalding had the opportunity to see Evans’s imported Russian stallions Listopad and Naplyv, both of which had been approved and registered by the British Arab Horse Society (AHS). Spalding even made offers to buy the stallions, but Evans cited “England’s need” for quality bloodstock.¹⁵ It should be noted that Naplyv’s dam, Nitochka, was a full sister to Naborr’s sire, and Listopad’s dam, Laba, was a half-sister to Naborr’s dam.

Spalding wrote to Tweed that he had heard about “an excellent Russian Arab of great classic beauty,” which Lytton had said was “superb.”¹⁶ The stallion, named Park, was being offered for sale by a businessman named Peter Provatoroff. As managing director of the Overseas Import Company Ltd., Provatoroff dealt in fur, food, and horses from Russia. He sold his imports at auction and by private treaty at his farm, Crippenden Manor, in Kent.¹⁷ After riding Park, an ex-racehorse, Spalding remarked that his “general conformation is excellent and his head is a good one. It is not an extremely dished one—but has good Arab appearance....[and under saddle] he is very alert and willing and tries very hard to please....[and] he has the darndest floating trot I’ve ever seen.”¹⁸ Immediately, Spalding purchased Park for Tweed. Then, based only on photos and pedigrees, he arranged to buy four mares included in a group of eighty-one horses, of various breeds, that Provatoroff would soon be importing from Russia to England.¹⁹ (Ultimately, only two of those mares—Napaika and Palmira—were purchased by Tweed, as the remaining two arrived in poor condition from Russia.) By the end of the summer, all of Tweed’s new Polish and Russian horses were in at his ranch in Scottsdale.

Fig. 3. Tulpan, imported in April 1963, was a half-brother of Naborr’s sire Negativ. Tulpan was never registered by the AHCRA. Courtesy of Barbara Sedwitz.

¹⁴ Steve Spalding to Ed Tweed, 22 April 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

¹⁵ Steve Spalding to Ed Tweed, 28 April 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

¹⁶ Steve Spalding to Ed Tweed, 25 April 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

¹⁷ A video of the horses at Crippenden Manor in 1963 can be seen here: youtu.be/BgpZeEz-BeI.

¹⁸ Steve Spalding to Ed Tweed, 26 April 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

¹⁹ Steve Spalding to Ed Tweed, 2 May 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

One other Russian Arabian arrived in the US in 1963. His name was Tulpan (Fig. 3). In March of that year, his purchasers, Dr. Lee and Barbara Sedwitz, of North Carolina, went to London for a medical conference. Both were avid foxhunters and had never owned Arabians. When they learned that Provatoroff and his daughter Patricia Ducas had horses for sale, they rented a car and paid them a visit. Mrs. Sedwitz recalled that driving through the snow to Crippenden Manor was quite an adventure. Ducas showed them a number of horses, including a chestnut mare of the Budyonny breed, but Dr. Sedwitz was particularly “enchanted” by the five-year-old Tulpan, as he’d always dreamed of having a white Arabian stallion. After a test ride on him in the Crippenden indoor arena, Dr. Sedwitz bought the horse and arranged to have him shipped by boat to the US. Tulpan arrived at Pier 51 on the Dutch freighter *Vlist* in April, where he was greeted not only by his new owner but also a reporter for the *New York Times*, who wrote, “This is a story about a Soviet-bred Arabian horse, a purchase in England, a trailer trip north and a lady from Dixie.”²⁰ Barbara Sedwitz recalled that it took a while to find someone to remove Tulpan from the wooden crate in which he’d traveled from England, as the New York dock workers refused to have anything to do with a “Soviet” horse.²¹

Once Barbara Sedwitz got the stallion home, she began training him and found him an apt pupil. In September 1963, she wrote that Tulpan

is in training for elementary dressage now, and we find he is a natural at jumping. My aim is to show him in green hunter classes to see how he fares, and to use him at stud for children’s hunters and half-bred pony hunters. We are in a part of the country where the up-grading of riding stock would be a most worthwhile cause! Since there are not many Arabian shows where we can compete, I am limited in that direction.²²

Three years later, she noted “Tulpan creates such interest everywhere we take him, even in Thoroughbred circles. Recently I [foxhunted] him in Southern Pines, despite our snow and mud here. He has been out with two Recognized packs [of foxhounds], which helps him get fit for the stud season.”²³

The last two of the seven imports, the mare Sportsmenka and the stallion Sopernik, arrived in 1965. They were gifts from the Russian government to L. B. Sheppard, a Standardbred breeder who owned Hanover Shoe Farms in Pennsylvania. Dean Hoffman, an expert on the Standardbred, wrote

After its inception in 1926, Hanover Shoe Farms quickly grew to be the dominant power in harness racing, outstripping the magnificent nurseries in Kentucky’s Bluegrass, many of which were established fountains of speed long before Hanover began....Every year since the United States Trotting Association in Columbus, Ohio, began maintaining records on the leading breeders in harness racing, only one name has stood at the top of the list: Hanover Shoe Farms.²⁴

²⁰ Michael Strauss, “Soviet-Bred Stallion Will Be Schooled in Dixie,” *The New York Times* 20 April (1963): 22.

²¹ Barbara Sedwitz, personal communication, 2019.

²² Barbara Sedwitz to Ed Tweed, 13 September 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

²³ Barbara Sedwitz to Ed Tweed, 27 February 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

²⁴ Dean A. Hoffman, *Quest For Excellence: Hanover Shoe Farms, The First 75 Years* (Neenah, WI: Russell Meerdink Co., 2001), 9.

In 1964, Sheppard and his daughter, Patricia Williams, traveled to Russia “on a horseman’s mission to Moscow,” where he was sent to pick out some Russian trotter yearlings in exchange for a stallion he had bred, Apex Hanover, who had won that year’s World Peace Trot in Moscow. This race had been held in order to foster “mutual friendship between American and Soviet horsemen.”²⁵ Apex Hanover was the first American-bred trotter to race in Russia since 1917. The seven yearling trotters chosen by Sheppard—known as the “Soviet Seven”—arrived in Boston in February 1965. Arabian historian Mary Jane Parkinson noted that two Arabians, Sopernik and Sportsmenka, had been included in this shipment as surprise gifts—the former for Sheppard and the latter for his daughter. It is unclear what happened to Sopernik, but Sportsmenka was given to Sheppard’s close friend Robert Armstrong, who later took out a magazine ad and sold her for \$800.00 (Fig. 4).²⁶

5. Registration and the AHCRA

As noted above, Naborr was imported to the US in 1963 and accepted for registration by the AHCRA. He had been born in Russia, was initially registered in the Russian Arabian Studbook, and was then sold to Poland and registered in the Polish Arabian Studbook. Two of his Polish-born sons had arrived in the US before he did. They, too, were registered without incident.

After Tweed’s three Russian Arabians arrived in the US, he sent in their paperwork and \$900 in fees to the AHCRA. Even though the Russian Arabian studbook was not on the AHCRA’s approved list in 1963, Tweed was hopeful that, like Naborr, his horses would be accepted by the AHCRA because their bloodlines were similar to those of Polish and Russian horses that had already been registered. Tweed’s mare Napaika was closely related to Naborr; his mare Palmira was related to Bajram, a half-Russian stallion recently imported from Poland by Dr. LaCroix; and the dam of his stallion Park was a full sister to Bajram’s sire Pietuszok.

Over the next few months, Tweed was asked by the AHCRA to provide additional information about his new horses, so he reached out to Provatoroff for clarification via letter, cable, and even phone (transatlantic calls were quite expensive in those days). He also asked Provatoroff for a copy of the Russian studbook, per the registry’s request. Things seemed to be going reasonably well on the registration front, because the secretary of the AHCRA wrote to Tweed in September 1963, “We have been in touch with the Russian Registry trying to learn as much about their operation and papers as possible. Their response was very satisfactory....Thought you might like to know that it sounds at least a bit more hopeful than you thought it might.”²⁷ A letter Tweed sent that month to Provatoroff went unanswered. Unbeknownst to Tweed, Provatoroff may have been ill, for he died in December 1963. In addition, there was no copy of the Russian studbook for the AHCRA to consult for pedigrees, because it would not be published for another two years.

In late August 1963, Tweed’s ranch manager received a letter from fellow Arabian breeder Daniel Gainey, who was at that time the president of the AHCRA (Fig. 5). Gainey was a wealthy industrialist who made his fortune at the firm Jostens, which specialized in making class rings. In addition to his breeding farm in Minnesota, Gainey owned a ranch near Tweed’s and adjacent to McCormick’s, and had sold the latter some mares. (Gainey would later be among the few people whom McCormick allowed to breed to Naborr.) In the letter, Gainey

²⁵ “Seven for One Trade: Sheppard Is Going to Russia to Deal For Horses,” *York Dispatch* 8 September (1964), 21.

²⁶ Mary Jane Parkinson, “Russian Imports,” *Arabian Horse Journal* October (1980): 16.

²⁷ Nellie Bailey to Ed Tweed, 24 September 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

wrote, "As you presented the problem, Mr. Tweed either now owns or expects to own two *supposedly* purebred Arabian horses from Russia....The Registry, as of now, has no position as regards horses from Russia. To the best of my knowledge, *we have never registered a horse from Russia*, and we have never been asked to."²⁸ (emphasis mine) Here, Gainey was incorrect on two counts. Even if he considered Naborr a Polish import, he was omitting the stallion Gouneiad, who was imported from Russia, albeit not Soviet Russia. He continued, "In view of the historic relationship between the two countries and because of many other difficulties, we have not investigated, and so we are not prepared to give you an answer."²⁹

FOR SALE

SPORTSMENKA
Foaled 1961 Chestnut

**Purebred Arabian Mare
Bred in Russia**

Sportsmenka	Pomeranetz	Priboy
	Sahara	Mommona
		Skship
		Sentochka

She is a fine individual, she is for sale because the Arabian Horse Club will not register her. She should be of interest to Half-Arab Breeders.

Robert E. Armstrong
Perryville Road
Rehoboth, Massachusetts

Fig. 4. Advertisement in *Arabian Horse World* magazine for the imported Russian mare Sportsmenka, September 1966.

Both successful Midwestern businessmen, Gainey and Tweed went back a long way and could be termed "friendly rivals." A decade earlier, Tweed had purchased Gainey's homebred stallion Skorage, while Gainey kept Skorage's full brother. Skorage proved to be the better sire, and became one of the best-known show horses of his era. After selling Skorage, Gainey acquired the stallion Ferzon, who took Gainey's program in a new direction and eclipsed

²⁸ Daniel C. Gainey to Ed Tweed, 30 August 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

²⁹ Ibidem.

Skorage as a sire of champions. Even though they were neighbors, Gainey and Tweed never bred to each other's stallions, likely because the two had different visions of the type of Arabians they wanted their programs to produce. Gainey preferred refined, "typey," ethereal horses of predominantly Skowronek breeding, whereas Tweed favored more athletic-looking horses and took as his motto "Beauty is as beauty does." Gainey's program was very successful, and his opinion of his own horses was quite high, as illustrated by this anecdote, related by Gainey's wife, Elaine. While attending a state dinner at the White House, hosted by President Richard Nixon, Gainey met the Shah of Iran, and "[w]hen the Shah was introduced to Gainey in the receiving line, he said to the Minnesotan, 'I hear you have Arabian horses.' Gainey was quick to reply, 'And mine are better than yours.'"³⁰

Fig. 5. Daniel C. Gainey, noted Arabian breeder and AHCRA president, with his close friend, President Richard Nixon. Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

Tweed and Gainey also differed in their politics. Although both men were Republicans, Tweed came from the more moderate portion of the party, and was literally a "Rotary Club Republican." Gainey, a vociferous anti-Communist, got involved early in national politics. He managed two of Harold Stassen's runs for the presidency, was a close friend and advisor of Nixon, and in 1963—while dealing with the Russian Arabian situation—was named treasurer of Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign. Gainey's biographer, Jacqueline Glenn, observed that he was "charismatic," full of "brash confidence," and "made up his own rules, followed his own code of conduct, and surrounded himself with a tight loyal circle of followers who would do anything he asked."³¹

In September 1963, Barbara Sedwitz introduced herself to Tweed in a letter, and the two kept up a correspondence over the next six years regarding the registration of their Russian

³⁰ Jacqueline J. Glenn, *The Gainey Experience: The Life and Leadership of Daniel C. Gainey* (Minneapolis, MN: Jostens, Inc., n.d.), 110.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 184.

horses. Sedwitz was thirty-three and energetic, whereas Tweed was seventy and in variable health (he suffered a heart attack a couple of years later, and a stroke a decade after that). Although she was an “outsider” as far as the AHCRA was concerned, she had actually met Provatoroff and Ducas, she was full of zeal, and she didn’t mind stepping on toes in order to get her horse accepted. She felt that if she and Tweed worked together, they could get all four of their horses registered. Already, she had had Ducas send a letter to the AHCRA “verifying the accuracy of the Russian stud book,” and had written to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture in Moscow for

notations on the stud book recordings for the direct ancestors of Tulpan, which was the major data I needed....Of course this could also be obtained direct from the Registry office in Poland, England, etc., but I think this data direct from Moscow is better for my purposes. From this all further ancestors may now be traced, should the US Registry so desire.³²

Somehow, Sedwitz seemed to be unaware that Tulpan was a three-quarter brother to Naplyv, Evans’s stallion who had been registered by the AHS in England, and who was also closely related to Naborr. Had she known this, she undoubtedly would have used this information to bolster her argument for his acceptance.

In October 1965, Gainey penned a letter to Sedwitz that was much more forthright than any that Tweed had received up to that point: “*Let’s be clear about the matter: the American Registry does not accept for registration American horses imported to North America from Russia.*” (As we have already seen, this was not strictly true.) He continued

This matter has been given careful thought by the Directors of the Registry and the position taken is a firm one, which is not likely to be altered in the early future. It seems that you have already imported a stallion from Russia. It is regrettable indeed that you cannot register him. *Perhaps he is one of the horses from Russia that were available in England; in that event you did not pay much for him,* and he should make you a good using horse. In any event, if you are disappointed, I am sorry. The responsibility of the Registry, however, is that of a public trust; *we must be totally impartial in following consistent logic,* to the end that the integrity of the certificates issued never be in doubt.³³ (emphasis mine)

Tweed’s reply to Sedwitz’s letter of October 13 noted, “I have not as yet received an actual refusal from the Registry.” He also mentioned that Gainey was

very much impressed with the stallion Park who is a beautiful bay and even talked about the possibility of buying this horse for his wife because he is so gentle, but nothing ever materialized on this idea. We didn’t press it because we were still hoping we would get the horse registered and use him for our own breeding program.³⁴

Sedwitz was so dissatisfied with Gainey’s reply that she hired an attorney to see whether taking legal action against the AHCRA would result in Tulpan’s registration: “It would be sincerely appreciated if your Board of Directors would review this matter in order that the necessity of a lawsuit may be avoided.”³⁵ Tweed, meanwhile, tried to reason with various AHCRA personnel, including General Wayne Kester, Ward Howland, and of course, Gainey,

³² Barbara Sedwitz to Ed Tweed, 13 October 1965, Brusally Ranch Archives.

³³ Daniel C. Gainey to Barbara Sedwitz, 20 October 1965, Brusally Ranch Archives.

³⁴ Ed Tweed To Barbara Sedwitz, 26 October 1965, Brusally Ranch Archives.

³⁵ Edwin P. Friedberg to Daniel C. Gainey, 29 November 1965, Brusally Ranch Archives.

to whom he wrote, “In your letter written to me some time ago, you said ‘*we mustn’t do business with the Russians.*’ I don’t know exactly what you mean there, Dan, because the United States does trade with Russia and most certainly has purchased Arabian horses from Poland [that were] traded with the Russians because the Russians control Poland, as you know.” (emphasis mine) Tweed continued,

We wholeheartedly believe in the Registry and your friendship and the friendship of the other officers of the Registry is prized by all of us. However, I am sure you will agree that the situation here on Brusally Ranch is a pitiful one when we look at these fine animals who would be a great asset to the breed in America, are left here as grade horses, when if registered, could produce excellent purebred Arabians. Along with this letter comes sincere wishes for everything that is best for you personally, Dan, and to our other friends at the Registry. Most sincerely, your friend, Ed J. Tweed.³⁶

Gainey’s reply to Tweed was thoughtful, nuanced, and much less brusque than the letter he had penned to Sedwitz:

No one could possibly be more humanly sympathetic to your circumstance than I, and this holds, I am sure, for every other director of the Registry. You have done a lot for the breed; you are a thorough gentleman, accredited with the highest of integrity. However, here in my own words is the policy of the Registry. After many years of experience and much careful investigation, the American Registry has come to accept the records and papers of the English and Polish Registries at face value, just as they accept ours.

He went on to give a convoluted explanation of what it would take for the AHCRA to register a Russian horse: “*If an Englishman...wanted to own a Russian horse and in good conscience bought it, and the English Registry, after thorough investigation and consideration, accepted that horse for English registration and if in two or three or seven or ten years an American were to buy that horse...we would register him.*” As for Naborr, he wrote, “Naborr was in the Polish Registry. He passed inspection and was accepted for American registration. Your three horses were not owned by Poles or Englishmen, nor were they in either Registry, and thus they are not subject to registration in our Registry.”³⁷ (emphasis mine)

Gainey’s remark about “not doing business with the Russians” may have been aimed at Provatoroff. As noted above, he and Ducas imported and sold numerous horses of various Russian breeds in England. The horses were often sold at auction at Crippenden Stud, and the onus was on the new buyers to get registration papers, if they so desired (and many of them did not). If Gainey suspected that Provatoroff was some kind of Soviet mole, he was quite mistaken. Provatoroff and his extended family, including his brothers Victor and Vladimir, had emigrated to England sometime in the 1920s. The three brothers became naturalized British citizens in the 1930s. Peter and Victor, a fur merchant, later became known for their “superlative” Russian art collections, while their brother Vladimir became a spy—*for the British*.³⁸ In 1942, Vladimir approached MI5 (the British equivalent of the US CIA) about joining its Russian section. A declassified secret memo notes, “We have nothing against this man, who, on his own admission, has recently been employed by the British Legation in Stockholm.”³⁹ Vladimir Provatoroff went on to become a member of the Special Operatives

³⁶ Ed Tweed to Daniel C. Gainey, 6 March 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

³⁷ Daniel C. Gainey to Ed Tweed, 16 March 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

³⁸ Christies London, “Lot Essay,” <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6111279>.

³⁹ National Archives, “Vladimir Provatoroff,” https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?q=provatoroff&_sd=&_ed=&_hb=.

Executive, also known as the “Baker Street Irregulars” or “Winston Churchill’s Secret Army” during World War II. Decades later, continuing the family’s artistic legacy, Peter Provatoroff’s granddaughter, high-end jewelry designer Annoushka Ducas, received an MBE from Queen Elizabeth II for her contributions to the UK’s jewelry industry.

It can be asked why Spalding did not attempt to register Tweed’s three horses with the AHS while they were in England. For one thing, Spalding had left the country before Tweed’s two mares arrived from Russia. As for registering Park, Tweed had raised this possibility with Provatoroff, but the latter quashed it because it “involves a lot of complications and also very considerable time.” Provatoroff also had a business reason for not wanting to register the mares in particular, writing

I dare not advertise that I have received Arab Fillies as the two principal breeders, Mrs. Simpson and Miss Evans, who bought from me the Stallions [presumably Naplyv and Listopad], are most anxious to buy the Fillies. It was a clear understanding between myself and Mr. Spalding that the fact that he bought the fillies should not come out, otherwise I will be in a rather difficult position, not having offered them to other people also.⁴⁰

Things began to move quickly at the AHCRA. After Mrs. Sedwitz’s attorney threatened to file suit, the AHCRA board members met and reviewed her application for Tulpan’s registration. They argued that because of the “inaccuracies and insufficiencies of Russian documents that have received the Registry’s attention, grave doubts have arisen... as to the reliability and credibility of such documents to establish purity of Arabian blood in Russian imports.”⁴¹ It was then that Tweed and Sedwitz both decided to formally abandon their quest to register the horses. Not long afterward, Tweed received an envelope from the AHCRA containing his Russian horses’ denied registration applications and his uncashed \$900 check. He and Sedwitz agreed to keep in touch if “anything new or different transpires in the future with regard to... any new developments.”⁴²

In 1967, Tweed decided to send his trainer to buy more Arabians in Poland for his Brusally Ranch breeding program. Hearing about the upcoming trip, Gainey asked Tweed if he would mind buying a Polish mare for him while his trainer was purchasing horses for Tweed. Even though it galled him to do so, Tweed agreed. He could not help noticing, however, that the Polish mare that Gainey chose for himself, a mare named Planeta, was half-Russian by breeding, as her dam was sired by Naborr and was out of a Russian mare purchased by the Poles in 1956.

Also included in Tweed’s 1967 Polish importation were two other Arabians with ties to Russia. The mare Prowizja, who was imported for resale, was half-Russian by pedigree and closely related to Tweed’s stallion Park through her dam Prowarda. Prowizja would go on to become a legendary show mare, be named US National Champion Park, and later, as a broodmare, produce three National Champions and one Reserve National Champion in the Park division.

Tweed’s new imported stallion Orzel would prove to be his most famous horse. As glad as he was to own the racehorse later dubbed “the Arabian Secretariat,” it did not escape Tweed’s notice that not only was Orzel half-Russian, he was in effect a “nephew” of the still-unregistered Park. Orzel was among the tallest Arabians imported in that era, measuring nearly 16 hands, and he bore a striking resemblance to Sopernik, one of the gift horses given

⁴⁰ Peter Provatoroff to Ed Tweed, 24 May 1963, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁴¹ Daniel C. Gainey to Edward C. Friedberg, 21 March 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁴² Ed Tweed to Barbara Sedwitz, 25 March 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

to L. B. Sheppard. This was no coincidence, as Sopernik's sire, the Russian-bred Priboj, was Orzel's grandsire (Fig. 6). For Tweed, Orzel would go on to be named US National Champion Racehorse, US National Champion Ladies' Sidesaddle, US and Canadian Top Ten Stallion, and US Top Ten English Pleasure.⁴³ Meanwhile, Park was serving as Brusally Ranch's tease stallion and posing in ads for horse-care products.

Fig 6. Left: Orzel, a racing stallion bred in Poland, was half Russian;
Right: Sopernik, a stakes winner bred in Russia, shared the same sireline as Orzel.
Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

Also in 1967, two officers of the AHCRA, Wayne Van Vleet and Ward Howland, attended the International Conference of Arab Horse Societies in England. While there, they studied the “English acceptance in their stud book of Russian bred horses.”⁴⁴ Howland later wrote to Tweed—who was still upset about the Russian ban—about “*the interest many of our breeders have in horses from Russia...* You may be interested in knowing that there were probably twelve to fifteen horses imported from Russia to England, of which their Registry has only registered six or seven. I am sure you recognize that our duty is to the Arabian horse in America.”⁴⁵ (emphasis mine)

Years later, Margaret Evans elaborated on the low registration numbers for the Russian Arabians in 1960s England: “Some of the horses were bought by people who couldn’t be bothered to go through the formalities of having horses registered. And it was a pretty time consuming job. Some of the horses were bought by people who weren’t interested in them as Arabs at all. They just saw them as things that you put a saddle on, and some were rejected by the breed society.”⁴⁶ At that time, in addition to having the paperwork in order, a horse had to be judged by a panel of three inspectors from the AHS. According to Evans, about 50 percent of the horses presented to the judges were accepted as breeding stock:

Some were undoubtedly faulty but this was emphasized by the fact that they were in poor condition after a long journey... And then they stayed at Crippenden where the feeding happened to be at a fairly low level...

⁴³ Tobi Lopez Taylor, *Orzel: Scottsdale's Legendary Arabian Stallion* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2016).

⁴⁴ Arabian Horse Club Registry of America, “Recent Activities,” *Arabian Horse World Magazine* April (1968): 42.

⁴⁵ Ward Howland to Ed Tweed, 14 December 1967, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁴⁶ Margaret Evans, “Early Russian Imports Into England: Russian Arabian Breeding Seminar 1983,” 3.

[Additionally,] the inspectors were mostly used to early maturing show stock and animals in condition.⁴⁷

Furthermore, Evans noted, “there was considerable prejudice against all imports [into England] at this time and at least one judge was heard to say that he would never knowingly put up an imported horse.”⁴⁸

In the summer of 1967, around the time that Tweed was buying more Polish Arabians, Howland wrote a revealing statement to Gladys Brown Edwards: “We [at AHCRA] feel the Russian English Arabs are of a somewhat different type than the ‘so-called’ classic Arab. We must therefore question their purity. We must also question their judgment in breeding to animals of this type. Finally, we question the Arab Horse Society’s acceptance of the animals.”⁴⁹ (emphasis mine) Howland’s statement was provocative, impugning the integrity and practices of the AHS. As we have seen, in the letters exchanged between AHCRA officials and Tweed and Sedwitz, questions about breed type and purity of bloodlines per se had not arisen; rather, the problem was that the papers accompanying the horses were insufficient to document their bloodlines. Either Howland’s statement was a new justification by the AHCRA for the horses’ exclusion, or it had been left unsaid in Gainey’s dealings with Tweed and Sedwitz. This raises the question that, if the purity of the Russian horses was truly at the heart of the registry’s exclusionary practices, then why would the AHCRA have allowed Naborr to be registered, and why would Gainey have purchased a half-Russian mare from Poland for his own breeding program? The next section will examine the seven Russian horses’ pedigrees, performance records, and conformation, as well as the preferences, conscious or unconscious, of their AHCRA evaluators.

6. Pedigrees and Preferences

We may never know all of the reasons for barring six of the seven Russian horses from registration until 1978, since the reasons given changed over time. None of the Americans involved in these early transactions, either the horses’ new owners or the officials at the AHCRA, were fluent in Russian or had much, if any, knowledge of Russian Arabian pedigrees and breeding practices. Transliterated spellings on some of the documents were often idiosyncratic, and it is certainly true that the six unregistered horses were of a different phenotype than Naborr, and were more related to each other than they were to him. Twenty years later, Gladys Brown Edwards would write that Tweed’s “Russian imports... were of the best bloodlines of the day.”⁵⁰

It is indisputable that Naborr deserved to be registered with the AHCRA, as he had proved to be an excellent sire in Poland. Furthermore, even if the registry had wanted to deny him registration because of his Russian parentage, it would have been almost impossible to do so, as two of his sons had been registered with the AHCRA before Naborr even arrived in the US. Of the seven Russian Arabians, Naborr was the only one from the Skowronek sireline—the same sireline to which Daniel Gainey’s stallion Ferzon belonged. Naborr also looked different from the other six Arabians, and in fact, his conformation was reminiscent of that of the Crabbet-bred horses that had been popular in the US since the 1920s. Bazy Tankersley, owner of Al-Marah Arabians and breeder of more than 2,800 horses, was a distant

⁴⁷ Evans, “Early Russian Imports,” 4.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 11.

⁴⁹ World Arabian Horse Organization, “The Russian Flap—Personal Prejudice & Politics vs. Pedigree & Quality,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20040222170927/http://waho.org/purityissue.html>.

⁵⁰ Gladys Brown Edwards, “Piolun,” *Arabian Horse World Magazine* November (1981): 189.

relative of Fowler McCormick, the husband of Naborr's owner. Tankersley was not enamored of most of the Polish horses that were being shipped by the boatload to the US in the 1960s, but she became smitten with Naborr, and was among the few who were allowed to breed to him in his early years in Scottsdale. In a 1966 letter to Tweed, Tankersley wrote, "I am getting more and more enthusiastic about the Naborr blood."⁵¹ In the two photographs below, there is a clear resemblance between Naborr and Tankersley's herd sire, Indraff, also of the Skowronek sireline (Fig. 7).

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Howard Kale Jr. created a series of descriptions of each Russian foundation sire's strengths and weaknesses, which he called "Pieces of Perfection." According to Kale's nomenclature, Naborr belonged to the Naseem sireline. Naseem had "an elegant front end with arch and length of neck, a beautiful head with expressive eyes, and wonderful style and charisma."⁵² Naborr was the only one of the seven Russian imports of this sireline, although some of the others also traced to Naseem.

Fig. 7. Left: Naborr, bred in Russia and imported by Anne McCormick; Right: Indraff, a stallion of the same sireline as Naborr, was the foundation sire of Ruth "Bazy" Tankersley's Al-Marrah Arabians. Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

Margaret Evans noted that Provatoroff and Ducas chose horses based on their athletic conformation rather than pedigree. Many of the early Russian imports to England were of the Priboj sireline, which produces, according to Kale, "horses of excellent motion. Priboj had a handsome head with strong well-muscled shoulder and good front legs. He was extremely functional and this line is known for producing fantastic race horses. His less than level croup allowed the hind end to engage itself for speed and power."⁵³ Three of the seven imports were by the Priboj son Pomeranets, named 1960 Champion of the USSR All-Union Exhibition and known for his action and athleticism. To this day, his influence is seen not only in Arabian pedigrees but also in Trakehner breeding.

Tulpan (Pomeranets x Taraszczka), imported by Dr. and Mrs. Sedwitz, was of the Priboj sireline. In Russia, Tulpan was rated Elite (one class higher than Naborr) and won two races. He scored 9 for parentage, 8 for measurements, 8 for conformation, and 6 for performance. Tulpan was closely related to Naborr, since Tulpan's dam, the great broodmare Taraszczka, produced Naborr's sire, Negativ. Now in her nineties and a widow, Barbara Sedwitz remarked in an interview that her stallion had excellent jumping style, good gaits, and wonderful

⁵¹ Bazy Tankersley to Ed Tweed, 23 May 1966, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁵² Howard Kale Jr., "Pieces of Perfection," <http://taylorarabians.com/russian-breeding-principles/>.

⁵³ Kale, "Pieces of Perfection."

manners. Tulpan was still alive when the AHCRA lifted the ban in 1978, but his owner was not notified. In fact, she did not learn of the rule change until 2019.⁵⁴

Napaika (Pomeranets x Nomenklatura), imported by Tweed, was also of the Priboj sireline. On her dam's side, she was a granddaughter of Naseem. (Howard Kale's champion stallion Muscat was bred according to the same formula, but in reverse: he was by a Naseem grandson and out of a Priboj daughter.) Napaika won three races in Russia, and Gladys Brown Edwards, who saw her at Brusally Ranch, called her "a well-built mare."⁵⁵ Napaika's dam, Nomenklatura, was a notable broodmare, counting among her offspring the superb sire Nabeg and the mare Neposeda, known as the "Queen of Tersk" for the quality of her foals. When Tweed retired from breeding in 1976, he put Napaika up for sale. For her new owners, she was later registered as a purebred, as were some of her offspring.⁵⁶

Sportsmenka (Pomeranets x Sakhara), one of the gifts to Sheppard, was another member of the Priboj sireline, with the addition of Kann on her dam's side of the pedigree. As Kale noted, "Kann, obtained from France in 1930, was chosen for his excellent structure. He had good functional legs, a deep shoulder, a long fine neck and good length of croup. The addition of Kann demonstrates the unwillingness of the Russians to sacrifice structure for prettiness."⁵⁷ Sportsmenka won two races in Russia, and she and her offspring were registered retroactively as purebreds.

Sopernik (Priboj x Snorovka), also a gift to Sheppard, was a son of Priboj, and his dam also traced to Kann. He and Sportsmenka were very closely related. Sopernik was rated Elite by Tersk. On the track, he ran for four seasons and was a stakes winner of three races. His history after importation is unknown.

Palmira (Arax x Provincia) was imported by Tweed. She was by Arax, a stallion bred in Poland and characterized by Kale as "Koheilan [athletic] in type with great length and strength of hind quarters, good legs, and great big black eyes. His neck was somewhat straight but long and flexible."⁵⁸ Her dam was by Priboj, a stallion also known for athleticism. Palmira won two races and was a paternal half sister to Dr. LaCroix's imported Polish mare Boltonka; the latter was named 1964 US Reserve National Champion Mare. Palmira, like Napaika, was sold when Tweed retired from breeding horses in 1976. She, too, was re-registered as a purebred, as were some of her offspring.⁵⁹

Park (Knippel x Ptashka) was also imported by Tweed. His sire Knippel won sixteen races and was the 1961 champion of the USSR All-Union Exhibition. Knippel sired Nahodka, 1975 British Supreme Female Champion, and was the grandsire of Monogramm, a notable sire in Poland. Park's dam, the stakes winner Ptashka, was also a champion of the Exhibition. In addition to being the full sister of the well-known stallions Pietuszok and Topol, she was an extremely valuable broodmare. In Kale's nomenclature, Park represented the Kann/Priboj cross. Evans wrote to Tweed in 1968 that she remembered Park "quite well, as we were interested in buying him and only rejected him in favor of 'Listopad'... 'Park,' if I remember correctly had the more quality of the two and was a lovely dark bay. *I am under the impression that Park would be accepted into our Stud Book* although he has a somewhat straight head, i.e.

⁵⁴ Barbara Sedwick, personal communication, 2019.

⁵⁵ Edwards, "Piolun," 189.

⁵⁶ Tobi Lopez Taylor, *The Polish and Russian Arabians of Ed Tweed's Brusally Ranch* (Tucson, AZ: Screenfold Press/Mare's Nest Books, 2013), 106–109.

⁵⁷ Kale, "Pieces of Perfection."

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *Polish and Russian Arabians*, 128–133.

lacking in dished profile.”⁶⁰ (emphasis mine.) Some years later, Arabian breed authority Carol Woodbridge Mulder visited Brusally Ranch and saw Park in person. She called him “magnificent” and “similar in type to Bask, but... a much better individual.”⁶¹ Bask was considered the most influential Arabian stallion of the late twentieth century, so this was high praise indeed (Fig 4). Unfortunately, Park died in 1974, before the registration ban was lifted. Tweed’s granddaughter, Shelley Groom Trevor, called the incident a “tragic waste of a handsome horse, a real loss to the breed.”⁶² Park’s only foal to be registered would go on to become a National winner.

Fig. 8. Left: Bask, the famous Polish stallion imported by Lasma Arabian Stud; Right: Park, Ed Tweed’s unregistered Russian stallion, was greatly admired by breed authority Carol Woodbridge Mulder, who thought him superior to Bask.
Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

7. Unintended Consequences

Tweed had used his Russian mares Napaika and Palmira for breeding, even though their purebred offspring could be registered only as half-Arabians and sold for half (or less) the price of a registered purebred. Not surprisingly, the new owners of these “purebred half Arabians” often wanted to participate in shows, where they had to compete against actual half-Arabians. Two of these purebred products of Tweed’s breeding program had such stellar show records that they qualified for National competition in the Half-Arabian division. Brusally Pafata (Park’s only registered foal) was named 1976 US Top Ten Half-Arabian English Pleasure, and Brusally Farmir (out of the mare Palmira) was named Top Ten Half Arabian Gelding and Top Ten Western Pleasure at the 1979 Canadian Nationals. (His Half-Arabian National wins actually took place a year after the ban had been lifted, when he could have been re-registered as a purebred.)

8. A New Beginning for Russian Arabians

In 1973, a decade after the first Tersk-bred Russian horses had arrived in the US, Gainey stepped down from his position as a governing member of the AHCRA. During this time, the US and USSR were entering a period of improved relations. The US adopted a policy of

⁶⁰ Margaret Evans to Ed Tweed, 16 June 1968, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁶¹ Carol Woodbridge Mulder to Ed Tweed, 31 August 1971, Brusally Ranch Archives.

⁶² Taylor, *Polish and Russian Arabians*, 137.

détente, and the two countries signed various arms-reduction treaties. The Apollo-Soyuz mission, in which Russia and American astronauts memorably shook hands in space, took place in 1975. The American people's attitude toward the Soviet Union had improved considerably from the 1950s. A Gallup poll taken in 1953 found that 88.5 percent of Americans viewed the USSR unfavorably. By 1974, that percentage had dropped to 35.6.⁶³

That same year, Howard Kale Jr., whose family had been breeding Arabians since his birth in 1942, traveled to England in search of new bloodlines for their Polish and Crabbet breeding program. There, he saw Nasmeshnik, a Russian stallion that had been imported by Provatoroff's daughter. Nasmeshnik was by Arax (sire of Tweed's mare Palmira) and out of Neposed, a three-quarter sister of Tweed's mare Napaika.

Nasmeshnik's pedigree aroused Howie's curiosity. A copy of the Russian Studbook (Vol. II) was located in J. A. Allen's Book Store in London. Hundreds of hours of transliteration in a hotel room followed. Slowly, the pieces began to fall into place as Howie sought to gain further understanding of the Russian breeding program. A trip to Russia and the Tersk Stud became an obvious next step. After several months, a visa was granted in June 1975. As more and more horses were shown, Howie knew that he had found "more than an alternative, an answer." Numerous trips followed.⁶⁴

Kale was well aware that the AHCRA Russian ban was still in place, and noted that "taming Dan Gainey...was not easy." Even though Gainey was no longer a part of the AHCRA, he still wielded a great deal of power and could make his opinions known.⁶⁵ When Kale had a chance to see the stud records at Tersk, he "realized that the Russian breeding and record-keeping practices were far superior to many others."⁶⁶ Also during this era, AHCRA officials at last traveled to Tersk to finally see in person its records, breeding methods, and horses.

Kale reached out to some of his associates for aid and funds to buy horses. By 1976, after he had made five trips to Tersk Stud, twenty imported Russian Arabians arrived at the family's ranch in the state of Washington. As he recalled, "I was determined to get 20 of the best they had...I told them (the Russians) that only the best would be good enough to make it in the United States. I said, 'If you value your reputation in the United States, these are the ones I'll take. If you don't, goodbye.'"⁶⁷ The new arrivals "were the object of much speculation and curiosity, of course, and visitors were numerous. Most all who came as skeptics left as converts."⁶⁸

The next year saw the arrival of Russian horses imported by Robert Stratmore, Hugo de Vroomen, and others. Stratmore, an attorney, would play a key role in negotiating with the AHCRA to accept Russian horses, which it did in November 1978, fifteen years after the first imports had arrived.⁶⁹ Gainey and Tweed both lived long enough to see Tweed's two remaining Russian horses (now owned by others) be registered as purebreds. Gainey died six months later, in April 1979.

⁶³ Tom W. Smith, "The Polls: American Attitudes toward the Soviet Union and Communism," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 42 (1983): 277-292.

⁶⁴ Dee B. Whittlesey, *The Dam Lines of Tersk* (Dallas: Arabian Horse Marketing Association, 1981), 2.

⁶⁵ Marian K. Carpenter, *Arabian Legends: Outstanding Arabian Stallions and Mares* (Colorado Springs, CO: Western Horseman, 1999), 84.

⁶⁶ Carpenter, *Arabian Legends*, 83.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 84.

⁶⁸ Parkinson, "Russian Imports," 54.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 56.

Kale's best-known Russian horse, Muscat, was acquired in a complicated three-year negotiation that involved his trading two high-quality Standardbreds for the stallion and consummating the deal on the Poland–USSR border. In 1980, he entered Muscat in the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show (Fig. 9). Kale would have been well aware that Scottsdale had been the center of much of the Russian Arabian controversy in the 1960s. As L. William Anderson noted, “For Howard Kale, the 1980 Scottsdale show was both a culmination and a beginning. It was the formal introduction of his initial Russian Arabian importation to America and a major moment of possible acceptance or rejection by the Arabian breeders and horsemen of this country.”⁷⁰

Fig. 9. The well-known Tersk-bred champion stallion, Muscat, imported by Howard Kale Jr., was related to all seven of the early 1960s Russian imports. Photo by Sparagowski. Courtesy of the Brusally Ranch Archives.

The show results vindicated this newer generation of breeders: Muscat was named Scottsdale Champion Stallion, and Pristan, also imported from Russia, was Scottsdale Champion Mare. After that, breeding and importing Russian horses became something of a fad. For a number of years, Russian Arabians won National championships and commanded top dollar at auction, until the American Arabian market crashed in the mid-1980s. It took politics a while to catch up with the Arabian horse; the Berlin Wall did not come down until 1989, and the Soviet Union was not dissolved until 1991. Today, more than forty years after the AHCRA's rule change, many notable American-bred show, racing, and endurance Arabians descend from horses bred at Tersk.

It is regrettable that six of the seven early 1960s imports to the US were not given their due as show horses or breeding stock. However, as Derry observes, “The purebred breeding world was (and is) a complicated one made up of many interconnected stories... [that] confirm that passion, greed, idealism, and love played a role in the world of breeders, and that certain international trade regulations were central to the evolution of an animal industry.”⁷¹ By reflecting on the Russian Arabian debacle, we gain additional insight into the Cold War era, when even the breeding of Arabian horses was affected by global politics. Fortunately,

⁷⁰ L. William Anderson, “Russian Sunday Revisited,” *Arabian Horse Times Magazine* May (2000): 245.

⁷¹ Derry, *Bred for Perfection*, xvi.

subsequent Arabian breeders saw the Russian horses for what they were, and not as a reflection of a human political system.

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