

*Extract from:*

## **The Police Dog: History, Breeds and Service**

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### **Chapter 18**

## **Irreconcilable Differences**

In our American working dog awakening we looked to Europe for dogs, leadership, knowledge and the helping hand up; and this was right and good for it was in central Europe – Belgium, Germany, northern France, the Netherlands – where the transformation took place, where a millennium of evolving herding dog service was transformed into our police breeds and working dog culture. It is because of the foresight of men such as Konrad Most and Max von Stephanitz in Germany and Earnest van Wesemael and Adolphe Reul in Belgium that we have the police, service and military dog of today, which has taken the canine partnership to new levels, made police service a vibrant reality.

But there was a concealed flaw in our crusade. Little did we know in the 1970s and 80s, as our idealistic quest gathered momentum, that a new generation of leadership in Germany had feet of clay, that even then betrayal was lurking in high places. The SV leadership, these heirs of von Stephanitz, these Germans on our pedestal, even then were abandoning his credo "form must follow function" in favor of their own new credo: "beauty is what we say it is and good enough rather than excellence is to be the new standard for work." And, implicitly, when good enough became problematic they were always prepared to further weaken expectations rather than breed stronger and more willing German Shepherds.

While the show dog enthusiast – the exhibitionist – is a politician and a manipulator to the very core of his soul, the sport or police trainer is typically in denial, wants to train his dog and remain oblivious to the world at large. This cannot end well, for grasping politicians control and define the sport field as well as the show ring, and the consequence is the watering down of all trials and all breeds. The driving force behind this is always the FCI or the AKC and their affiliated breed clubs. It is not a coincidence that the most conspicuously prospering working lines are the Malinois under the KNPV in Holland and the NVBK in Belgium, both independent organizations by and for serious dog trainers and breeders. Beyond the long standing predominance in the various national ring sport and police trials, the Malinois is more and more dominant at the major IPO championships, anywhere there is open competition, forcing the German Shepherds to retreat to their private venues, such as the SV national IPO championship and the various WUSV events.

Furthermore, the robust character of the second rank of working breeds, those beyond the German Shepherd and the Malinois, is being incessantly trivialized and eroded as a direct consequence of national organizations in the hands of the canine exhibitionists and politicians. These once noble breeds – these Dobermans, Riesenschnauzers and Rottweilers – are becoming pathetic caricatures of the visions of their founders. Even the German Shepherd is preserved more by enormous numbers than responsible leadership and breeding, for most of the German show lines share the mediocrity of the lesser breeds. If you doubt any of this, go to an AKC show and watch the German Shepherds slink around the ring; and if you think that Europe is immune, go to Germany and witness an SV conformation show, or watch the insipid preliminary protection exercises on the internet.

These conflicts and compromises – between serious trainers and conformation hobbyists, police service intensity and companion dog softness, foundation working dog ideals and commercial exploitation – have been ongoing for a century, almost from the beginning. Ultimately, these are irreconcilable differences; the police dog culture will prosper to the extent that real control over breeding selection, trial procedures (especially judging expectations) and registration requirements passes into the hands of a community of police level trainers and breeders in active cooperation with police agencies. Permanent separation from existing purebred organizations, most especially those under FCI and AKC auspices, is essential for ongoing viability. The winds of change are there, FCI and AKC annual registrations are plummeting and the Malinois more and more is the IPO winner and the police dog of choice.

Political manipulation is at the core of conformation exhibition, every judge is essentially a political mediator, because that is what is necessary to obtain a license and more to the point judging assignments. The SV conformation judge is a broker, trading placements and doing favors in the expectation of future benefit. In America professional handlers are important not because of skill in presentation, but because they are political players and manipulators, trading money, favors and influence for the ribbons and tin cups of value only to those whose lives are so empty that such trinkets take on meaning. Political control of the conformation show process goes hand in hand with control of the registering entities, and play and show dog control of these organizations is how the Schutzhund trial has been emasculated, pussified, with ever shorter courage tests, the removal of the attack on the handler and a scoring system that has gone from focus on the courage test to the point where a dog, at the championship level, can fail to engage on the long bite and still only lose three points and thus rate excellent, obtain the coveted V rating.

Complacency is how breeds such as the Doberman Pincher and Bouvier des Flandres are being pushed over the edge with European bans on ear cropping and tail docking. By allowing national and international organizations run by and for pet dog marketers – Cocker Spaniel and Poodle exhibitionists – control over our working trial rules and administration is how we come to have so much emphasis on subservience that a dog touching a sleeve at the wrong moment is to be dismissed rather than given a minor point deduction. If we leave the rules to the politicians and dog sellers, we cannot complain about the consequences.

## **The Euro Cabal**

During the latter portion of the twentieth century the SV, the German Shepherd community in the homeland, was increasingly dominated and transformed by a cabal of new men focused on ever more fashionable external appearance, with a concurrent, gradual, incessant loss of focus on the working origins of the breed. The consequence was the cleavage of the breed into increasingly grotesque show lines and working lines less and less competitive in the real world. Collateral damage has been the ongoing weakening of the Schutzhund trial, rebranded and trivialized as IPO.

Perhaps the ultimate example is the Martin brothers, Walter of the von der Wienerau kennel and Herman whose kennel was vom Arminius. Walter was the guiding light, the architect of this new German Shepherd, the banana back dog, and Herman was SV president from 1984 until 1994, only two years before the passing of both brothers within weeks in the fall of 1996.

Incest and nepotism was endemic at the top, for when Walter's dogs became Sieger it was Herman in his role of SV president who was making the selections and

handing out the trophies, when he was not actually selecting his own dogs, as in these Sieger selections:

1986 & 1987	Quando von Arminius	SZ 1547134
1992	Zamb von der Wienerau	SZ 1696277
1996	Visum von Arminius	SZ 1789549

Like the passing parade of a king without pants, with no one having the courage to point out nakedness but one small, innocent boy, the Shepherd community, especially the fawning American conformation dilettantes, incessantly glorified and deified these self-serving bureaucrats who had inherited the mantle of von Stephanitz and used it for their own aggrandizement.

From the early years the test of work, the Schutzhund trial, evolved as the foundation of the German Shepherd Dog. But in the latter years of the twentieth century, slowly, subtly at first but with ever gathering momentum, the Schutzhund trial was incessantly made less demanding for an increasingly predominant conformation oriented segment of the breeding community. The process was insidious, subtle in the beginning; pressure on judges to be a little bit lenient, on the helpers to moderate their intensity, to go easy on a weak dog because of his promise for the show ring. In the eighties the export market, especially the American market, for titled dogs put a significant cash value on mediocre titled dogs, even dogs with false certificates, creating another group with an economic interest in a diluted trial. The rules were repeatedly modified, decreasing courage test distances, making the scoring less demanding, introducing the padded stick and entirely eliminating the attack on the handler. Thus both the letter and the spirit of the law were incessantly debased.

Historically the SV system depended on an overall sense of integrity and peer pressure to maintain standards of correctness and rigidity in the judging community. SV officials could and did monitor the performance of judges and maintain standards. Over time, as the upper levels of SV administration became more and more show oriented and corrupt, there was an ever-diminishing tendency to maintain standards. When the leading conformation kennels are those of the SV president and his brother, our old friends the Martin boys, the propensity to lower standards becomes blatant.

The final plea of von Stephanitz had been "Take this trouble for me: Make sure my shepherd dog remains a working dog, for I have struggled all my life long for that aim." But these arrogant, self-serving men, this evil cabal, has diluted the working requirements and culture. Under their stewardship this noble breed has been split asunder, into their commercial conformation dogs and the working lines upholding the heritage of the breed in police service and on trial fields around the world. Even now the working lines are yet again dividing, for play sport and real police level work.

Thus over the past thirty years control of Shepherd affairs in Germany has gradually fallen into the hands of an elite group of show breeders, who have increasingly dominated the SV and its leadership positions. This trend has not been without resistance and there has been increasing strife within the Shepherd community. Working advocates such as Dr. Helmut Raiser have struggled to fight back, gone to the membership to seek club office, winning office, and then being sabotaged by the entrenched show line establishment. Raiser had significant support, enough to elect him as national breed warden of the SV which meant that he would judge the females at the Sieger show. This struck terror and panic into the heart of the SV elite, which found a way, legal or illegal, to remove him from his office. When you begin striking out at your own serious trouble is on the horizon.

As in the Catholic church, the person at the top has traditionally held office for life and been able to project and conserve power into the future by those he puts in the position to succeed him. In both organizations this extreme concentration of power allowed for sustained growth and consistent policy over time, was in some ways necessary for survival and prosperity in a difficult social and political setting. But power does corrupt, and both organizations are evolving into top-heavy bureaucracies increasingly irrelevant to those at the bottom. Inexorably the Malinois has crept into the working role historically the forte of the German Shepherd, dominating the international IPO competitions and more and more prominent in the military and police forces. When the Defense Department in the United States began a breeding program for military dogs it chose the Malinois rather than the German Shepherd.

**German Annual  
Registration Trends**

Breed	2010	1997
GSD	14,501	29,824
Boxer	1,783	2,659
Great Dane	1,488	1,853
Rottweiler	1,586	3,168
G Schnauzer	970	1,998
Hovawart	1,231	1,479
Airedale	997	1,423
Dobermann	802	1,577
Malinois	570	385

See complete table with all years in the appendices.

Much of the resistance has been passive, men breeding their working dogs in the old ways for the old reasons, still valid, still in the spirit of von Stephanitz. Enclaves of the original heritage held out in the old East German Democratic Republic, the Czech republic and among elements of the Belgian and Dutch breeders and trainers; a few good men everywhere hold fast. Numerically the Shepherd in Germany is in free fall, registrations falling by half in a decade, and the SV bureaucrats and office holders are floundering, for their comfortable jobs and prestigious offices are at stake.

This discussion has focused on the German Shepherd for good reason: the huge numerical predominance of this breed in Germany and around the world. German registrations for 2010 were 14,501, which was an order of magnitude larger than

any other working breed, and the predominance on the trial fields is even more overwhelming. (See the table for more complete data.)

The sheer power of the SV in Germany and its influence around the world through the WUSV, the export of breeding stock and the foreign service of SV Schutzhund and conformation judges is from an historical perspective without compare. Today this power, this prestige and this influence is waning, both in numbers and in moral authority, for the corruption, arrogance and hubris at the top of the SV is increasingly blatant. It is as if Judas had staged a coup and installed himself as pope in the place of Peter.

As the quality and availability of the West German Shepherds declined in the 1980s, and as worldwide demand grew incessantly, attention shifted to other, more robust and traditional, sources of Shepherds, primarily in East Germany and a little later in the Czech Republic. Times were hard in both of these nations still behind the Iron Curtain, and western currency, especially the American dollar, spoke with a loud voice.

Twenty or thirty years ago there was talk of the SV breaking away from the FCI and leading the world's Shepherd clubs, through the WUSV, on their own course. At that time there was more difference between the Schutzhund and IPO trials and the world union was strong. This opportunity was allowed to pass, probably because of fear on the part of the national clubs that it would interfere with the profitable export market, especially the lucrative American market; outsiders in Germany and elsewhere would have leapt at the chance to make new clubs and yammer about dissident clubs; and the AKC would no doubt have supported the new FCI affiliated play shepherd clubs. In retrospect this was perhaps never in the cards because the

SV leadership even then wanted to separate themselves from Schutzhund and police service and focus on the pet and show dog market.

## **The Rest of Europe**

As the Germans reemerged from the devastation of war and reestablished their national programs, the desire to promote their canine cultural and commercial interests in neighboring nations resumed, with emphasis on links directly to the German bureaucracy, to an extent bypassing the national clubs in the neighboring nations. This had the tendency to produce conflict and exacerbate resentment as the canine establishments in nations such as the Netherlands began to push back against direct SV intrusions in their internal affairs, through the FCI and in the courts.

A half century of war interspersed with adversarial peace had created deep-seated resentments and hostility in the peoples of Holland, France and especially Belgium, many of whom suffered grievously under German occupation. Germans had of course also suffered, but their homeland was never occupied in WW I and in WW II they were not occupied under the wartime conditions of forced conscripted labor and enormous civilian oppression and suffering as they had inflicted on the Belgians and Dutch. Post war allied occupation of Germany never even began to approach the brutality, exploitation and inhumanity of Nazi occupation. Belgium especially suffered and Belgian breeds, police programs and training venues were cast into obscurity for a generation, some never to recover.

These other nations, adversaries in war for most of a century, historically had a much different training regimen and culture, focused in the protection work on their full body suits, making the entire man the target for the dog rather than an offered arm. The creation of IPO as an international version of Schutzhund was a Trojan horse, a means of projecting German influence, power and authority to the rest of the world. Although IPO had been in marginal existence for a relatively long time, as with all things German there was resistance and resentment on several levels. KNPV and Ring trainers were the elite of their nations, and had little interest in another round of subservience to the Germans. But even in these nations the German breeds were enormously popular, and the German Shepherd establishment especially was able to project influence and some control even into the internal affairs of these recent military adversaries. IPO was and is as much a political gambit as a canine sport.

Historically IPO and Schutzhund emerged from different cultures for different reasons. Schutzhund, taking on its current form after WW II, had evolved primarily as a breeding eligibility assessment. The function of the judge, explicitly and implicitly, was to evaluate the intangibles as well as add up the points. In the protection phase he could award up to ten points for courage and hardness, entirely according to his own opinion, and throughout the entire process he had and was expected to exercise real latitude to reward demeanor and enthusiasm as well as the letter of the rules, to look for the real dog as well as the apparent. The IPO was more of a sport, the role of the judge more to count up the points rather than trying to discern and reward or penalize the underlying nature of the dog. This disparity in role was relative, was a continuum between strictly point counting on one end and incorporating a subjective evaluation of the nature and value of the dog. Schutzhund put more emphasis on being a staunch breed suitability test and the more show and companion dog oriented IPO emphasized obedience control and precision.

Over the years philosophical and practical distinction between the SV Schutzhund program and the FCI IPO abated as the SV, in reaction to political correctness pressure and plummeting registration numbers, became increasingly show oriented and exhibited diminishing commitment to police dog character in favor of appealing

to a softer civilian market. IPO and Schutzhund grew increasingly closer together as differences in rules and procedures were eliminated and the Schutzhund judge no longer had the ten points for courage and hardness to award. From the serious trainer's point of view this has been an incessant and continual lowering of standards, seeking a lowest common denominator to accommodate show line breeders and play trainers who do not want to deal with hard-core dogs and hard-core people. Increasingly the SV wanted the Schutzhund trial to be easy for the show dogs to pass and to accommodate commodity level dogs appealing to pet owners and play trainers.

As the SV came increasingly into line with the spirit and reality of the FCI mainstream, became just another show dog organization, the convergence of IPO and Schutzhund was an ongoing process of dilution: the A frame replacing the traditional wall, the padded stick replacing the bamboo stick, ever-shorter courage tests, the elimination of the attack on the handler, increasing emphasis on subservience in the obedience.

The removal of the attack on the handler from the Schutzhund I protection routine is a perfect case in point. What was the reason for this? Because no matter how much pressure they put on the decoy to ease off weak dogs were increasingly failing the exercise. The process, the original concept, was that the trial should reveal the weaknesses and the breeders would take steps to resolve problems through breeding and training. As increasing emphasis on conformation and pet sales evolved, the tendency was to weaken the rules to accommodate softer dogs rather than reemphasizing serious working character in breeding selection.

Germany and Belgium had from the beginning been prominent in working dog affairs as pioneers in police dog deployment and as the nations of origin of the predominant police breeds. The Germans, especially the German Shepherd advocates, were aggressive promoters of their breeds, training methods and national canine culture. Von Stephanitz in particular had been much more than a breeder or club leader; he was a promotional and marketing genius of the first magnitude.

The irony is that it was the Belgians who were the pioneers, and it was Belgian rather than German Shepherds that American police departments in cities such as New York and Detroit were importing in the decade beginning in 1900. But this was obliterated by the German invasion and occupation of 1914, and it would be most of a century before these Belgian dogs, trainers and breeders would again begin to gain international attention. Although the breeds were nominally Belgian, the Belgians who created and nurtured them were culturally and linguistically Dutch. In this Flemish countryside the Dutch border hardly matters, and the Dutch trainers and breeders took up the cause, were enormously successful in breeding, training and deploying these Malinois, and in lesser numbers Bouviers, through their community of active civilian and police trainers. Although the Dutch have primarily been involved with the Belgian breeds, their Dutch Shepherd is now gaining traction as a slightly larger and more massive alternative, in a way a middle ground between the Malinois and the German Shepherd.

The key to Dutch success has been the close civilian and police cooperation, from the trainers on up through the ranks to the administrators of police agencies and the KNPV, often the same men. This is in contrast to the general tendency of the SV to marginalize the partnership with the police and military in favor of pursuing the show dog illusion and the popular civilian or pet market. The underlying difference is that the Malinois has not ever been especially popular as a companion or show dog and thus not been cursed with strong kennel club affiliated national breed clubs and their incessant pressure to water down the character to pander to a popular market or the propensity to breed for the grotesque extremes of the conformation show ring. Show dogs have never been an overpowering revenue source; there are no Americans,

Japanese or Chinese standing just outside European Malinois show rings ready to write a check for half a million dollars or even more for a "winner."

## America

Beginning with the surge of German Shepherd popularity in America in the 1920s and the promotional program for the Doberman Pincher slightly later, leading up to the much-publicized participation with the Marine Corps in the south pacific, police and protection dogs were universally perceived in terms of these German breeds. In the aftermath of WW II military canine activity nearly ceased, with the Marine Corps dropping their program entirely until the Vietnam era. In the early 1950s the last known police canine program of the era, in New York, was abandoned as the radio equipped squad car became the routine for police patrol. American dog training consisted of AKC obedience and tracking, a lot of hunting dog activity and a small number of personal protection or guard dog trainers, regarded as slightly suspect by the mainstream canine community. The 1950s were a lost decade.

As police programs began to reemerge and the first interest in Schutzhund began to awaken in the later 1960s these German breeds and training regimens were so well entrenched and so pervasive that few people in America were even aware that there were other breeds and traditions in other nations.

For all of these historical reasons, the first period of the modern American working dog era, from the 1960s through the 1990s, was about German breeds, training methods and deployment strategies. The first hints of change came in the mid to later 1980s when a small wave of French Ring enthusiasm surfaced. In spite of a certain amount of publicity and activity in the canine world, this had only modest long-term impact; the American Ringers were destined to quarrel incessantly without ever gaining any real traction. Halfhearted efforts to transplant KNPV to America, the Mondio Ring offshoot and numerous home grown programs such as PSA diluted energies; it seemed like the same 200 people continually going from one great new thing to the next. The French, lacking a national breed to promote, training venues perceived as relevant to police service and any apparent flare for public relations in the American environment were destined to remain irrelevant, as were the American ring-training enthusiasts.

But real change was coming, for a couple of emerging trends began to make inroads on this German monopoly. By the early 1980s a few pioneers were taking notice that it was possible to purchase KNPV certified Malinois in Holland for very reasonable prices, which could then be resold in America with a significant profit. Police administrators are by their nature tradition oriented and conservative; acceptance of an unknown breed from a nontraditional source was slow, and some of the imports were of marginal or worse quality and could be difficult for the typical American police trainer or handler to deal with. But in spite of some poor dogs and training issues the good dogs were very good and acceptance gradually increased until the Malinois emerged as a serious factor in American police service.

The second major factor was a gradually increasing cadre of Malinois pioneers in Europe crossing over into IPO and Schutzhund competition. In Germany kennels such as *von Löwenfels* of Peter Engel (no relation) were beginning to produce Malinois making a splash on Schutzhund fields, in America as well as Europe. There were problems, for IPO participation required some sort of an FCI registration, which often had to be conjured up with a little creative paper work. The Malinois star was nevertheless on the rise.

January 1, 2012 was the day Schutzhund as a standalone German program ceased to exist, and was replaced by IPO under FCI administration and regulation. This was a turning point in several ways. On one level it was a brave new world of

opportunity, celebrated as a unified level playing field on which to build for the future. On another level it marked a great German political victory, for their program and culture prevailed over the full suit based national venues, so many years of tradition, in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Less understood or celebrated, but perhaps most significantly, January 1, 2012 was the day complete control of FCI working dog affairs passed, probably forever, out of the hands of working dog people. The consequences are ominous, for Europe is awash in passivism, green party extremes and an ever-expanding spirit of government intrusion into every detail of life. Even giving a ten-year-old boy a pocketknife on his birthday, a rite of passage in middle America, has become illegal in many places, and seen as a perversion in the more politically correct circles. Laws restricting prong collars, radio collars, testing dogs with the padded stick and banning many breeds with a fighting background became more and more pervasive. Much of this spirit pervades the general show and pet dog community and every bump in the road will be the occasion for further restriction, further pussification of the working dog culture.

The gradual demise of Schutzhund in favor of the more pet and companion oriented IPO program, the reduction in emphasis on German Shepherds suitable for police and military service, was in response to societal changes, an evolution toward an ever more pacifist, regulated, emasculated social order taking hold in Europe. There is a certain element of irony in the fact that this time period also marked the emerging era of increasing demand for serious police and military dogs, particularly in the wake of the September 11th atrocity and the prolonged Middle East engagements. These urban conflicts and guerilla war engagements in rural and remote areas created an enormous demand for military patrol dogs at a time of ever increasing demand for police patrol dogs in America and elsewhere, especially in response to out of control drug distribution on the streets of America. Diminishing supply and escalating demand can mean only one thing, the opportunity for new sources of serious dogs to come to the forefront. The new era for the Malinois was at hand.

The increasing presence and prestige of the Malinois, as the consequence of the ongoing dilution of the German Shepherd and the enormous increase in demand for serious dogs post 9/11, is an ongoing trend. The modern heart, the driving force, of this Malinois surge comes not only from Belgium but also from Dutch police training fields. In the 1980s the Belgian Malinois was virtually unknown in America and particularly in American police service; today it is in the process of replacing the German Shepherd as first choice for serious trainers.

This is the culmination of a long and arduous journey, from the pioneering days in Ghent, and a tribute to the perseverance of these Flemish people from among which the Malinois arose, who endured so much in a century that saw their nation at the epicenter of two world wars, neither of their making. Perhaps a moment of reflection on the courage and tenacity of these few men in this small nation, forgotten for most of a century, would not be inappropriate.

## **A Shrinking World**

Beginning in the early 1920s wealthy Americans sought prominence and status by importing winning show dogs, German Shepherds particularly but also other breeds. John Gans was an example, importing many prominent German Shepherd show winners or their progeny for his Hoheluft kennel in New York, such as Pfeffer von Bern. These were not necessarily naïve Americans being sold over rated dogs, although that went on, but often the best dogs in Germany in the prime of their life.



Pfeffer von Bern was actually taken back to Germany to become Sieger in 1937, something almost beyond imagination today.

But dogs were not the most important thing Gans brought over, for he hired German born Ernst Loeb to be his kennel manager and secure the best dogs available in Germany. Loeb, eventually in the importing and handling business for himself, was enormously influential for many years, until well after WW II. In this entire era the dog world, primarily show dogs, was dominated by those with access to serious money or canny enough to take advantage of stud dogs imported by others. The direct purchase and import of European dogs was difficult for the typical working class enthusiast, and would be so until well into the 1970s. Prior to this time the vast majority of imports were show line dogs, with very little contact between working line European trainers, mostly working class themselves, and American amateurs who were just beginning to have a serious interest in the training and application of police style dogs.

When I first went to Europe in the early 1980s it was a new and mildly exotic experience, for until this time Americans had found it relatively difficult to afford casual European travel, expensive in terms of both time and money. Prior to reasonably priced air transport, which gradually became available in the 1960s and 70s, a European tour was by ship and thus a matter of weeks or months, beyond the reach of a working man of modest means with a job and a need to provide a living for his family. The internet was a quarter century in the future, telephone calls were expensive, and even if you had the money you did not have the personal relationships, know who to call. The better European trainers, on the whole working class men themselves, had little contact with or conception of American canine affairs and were not especially English speaking; significant importation of dogs based on working credentials and character was in the future. The American who had actually been to Europe became an instant authority figure in his breed, and European visitors were exotic and unusual.

Although importing dogs for conformation exhibition and breeding was more or less an ongoing process, except during the war years, the working character was taken for granted. It was implicitly assumed that every German Shepherd or Doberman was an incipient police dog; all it would require would be a little training to let lose the internal beast. In reality, nobody actually had any comprehensive idea of what exactly such a dog should be capable of, what the requisite character attributes were, how to identify the suitable dog to train and how breeding selection related to all of this. American police service and especially commercial guard dog services were primitive, there were no military dogs until the WW II programs, quickly abandoned after the war, and there was no ongoing high-level amateur training. We were like novices with a complex digital camera set up in automatic mode, some things were accessible, but the ultimate capability was in general beyond our experience or comprehension. There was no perception of any need or reason to test and select for character, dogs were proven in the show ring, or so we thought. And of course, because of all of this, European dogs of deficient or questionable character, gun shy for instance, became prime candidates for a one-way trip to America, which meant that our domestic breeding resources were always suspect.

Starting in the early 1960s the AKC oriented American German Shepherd show dog world, previously dominated by imports, turned inward. The import went out of fashion virtually overnight and the entire American breeding community, like lemmings over the cliff, began breeding incredibly tight on the new wonder dog, the recently crowned Grand Victor Lance of Franjo and his ever more inbred progeny. This dog became the prototype for the new American shepherd, extreme in angulation, slope of top line and side gait. The entire AKC oriented Shepherd world just turned on a dime down a side road and never looked back.

Just as the AKC Shepherd people were turning their backs on Europe, an entirely new sort of dog, the Schutzhund style working dog, was beginning to emerge in America. The sixties and seventies were times of great change. There was unfulfilled curiosity and desire in America and Europe and air travel became increasingly affordable for the more affluent working man. This meant that a couple of Schutzhund clubs could pool finances and fly a German Schutzhund judge or trainer over for a week or more to hold trials and training sessions. These judges became vital links for those seeking dogs of European lines, and while some were focused on self-importance and even profit on the whole they were honest, well-intentioned men primarily interested in advancing the sport and the breed. This also meant that the man of ordinary means could go to Europe and see for himself, and perhaps purchase a good dog. The emergence of the internet in the 1990s was the final stage in the transformation of the canine world into one big neighborhood.

## **Evolving Trends**

In Europe, the Belgian Malinois is in ascendance. This breed and this police dog heritage, which emerged in Ghent in 1899 only to be crushed by the German invasion and occupation of 1914, after a century wandering in the wilderness, is rising from the ashes, emerging as the predominant worldwide police breed. An important causative factor in this resurgence is that the Malinois has been virtually free of show breeder control and influence, and that they flourish outside of grasping and suffocating FCI control. The year 1963, when the men of the NVBK summoned the courage to break free, may well ultimately be seen as the turning point for the over all working and police dog movement. The three primary Malinois cultures – that is the KNPV lines, the NVBK lines and the French Ring lines – are relatively diverse and serve as mutual reserve genetic pools.

Although the working German Shepherd community is in the midst of a crushing identity crisis, caught between the SV led show dog establishment and the Malinois surge on the sport fields and police rosters of the world, a long and noble history and enormous worldwide numbers provide a cushion, the possibility of redemption. In the broad picture, the rise of the Malinois over the past thirty years has been the blessing in disguise, for the competition may be the only thing that can give the German Shepherd working community the courage to rise up in the spirit of 1963 and take their fate into their own hands. The German Shepherd working lines, for all of the problems of recent years, are still numerous, historically deep and diverse. These resources of integrity and courage, human and canine, include the Czech lines, the old East German lines, remnant working lines in Germany itself, breeders in Holland and Belgium and other small but persisting pockets of excellence, resolve and courage.

In America, beginning prior to the First World War, when a very small number of American police personnel were making inquiries to Belgium and England and importing dogs, the North American protection oriented working dog movement has been dependent on European breeders, trainers and organizations for dogs, training methodology and deployment strategy. Progress was slow and erratic, for police, military, sport and civilian protection programs have struggled largely in isolation rather than in synergistic cooperation and mutual support as exists in much of Europe. This was of course natural and necessary, for it was these Europeans who were creating the protection breeds and building the infrastructure, certification and deployment strategies under which they have prospered, made fundamental contributions to many European police and military programs.

As Americans became aware of the quality of the better European working lines in the 1970s and 80s, and the sophistication of the breeding, training and police deployment practices, we gradually came to comprehend and respect the German

Schutzhund trainers, and a little later the police trainers and breeders in the Netherlands and the NVBK community in Belgium. All of this was well and good, and it was quite natural to see these people on a pedestal of our own making.

There were, however, down side consequences of this pedestal building. First, the money Americans and others were spending began to change the fabric of the European working dog world, gradually made dog brokering more attractive and more profitable. In Germany Schutzhund titled dogs became an export commodity, and a support structure of accommodating judges and brokers, used dog salesmen, came into place. Another example was a commercialization of the Dutch police community, where increasingly dogs were trained with an eye on the export market. This tended to produce a profit driven motivation for quick and superficial training, the minimum to slide through for the certificate and thus another lucrative sale. If the dog was marginal, it did not matter so much, for it would never be seen again, and many Americans were not smart enough to tell the difference anyway. As a consequence more care was required in the purchase of a titled dog, which was not a serious problem for most Dutchmen with personal contacts but a very important consideration for an American or other foreigner interested in a sight unseen acquisition, which put even more importance on the reliability of the broker providing the dog.

The Belgians and the French were much less engaged, mostly because their numbers are small, although the Belgians in the NHSB have made belated but generally ineffective attempts to gain an American presence. The French Ring community has had a sporadic interaction with the American enthusiasts, and exported Ring line Malinois have gradually become more common on American sport fields, where novices with another breed often end up seeking out a Malinois. This has resulted in virtually no real involvement with or effect on American police canine practice.

Although Americans caught up in enthusiasm for Schutzhund and the police breeds over the past thirty years have rightly come to regard Europe as the foundation of police service in terms of breeds, training methodology and deployment strategy, they have in general failed to fully appreciate that even in Europe this culture is increasingly separate from the mainstream FCI oriented world of companion and show dogs, which is primarily concerned about conformation shows, pet sales, secure jobs for bureaucrats and the opportunity to play expert by engaging in the political maneuvering necessary to become a conformation judge. In the FCI scheme of things, support of police level character is only a public relations ploy, giving lip service primarily to enable companion dog customers the pretense, the illusion, of owning serious police dogs.

This distinction is most evident in the Netherlands, where the KNPV requires no registration and police departments are much more concerned about performance than breed identification. The *Raad van Beheer*, the Dutch equivalent to the AKC, has generally been indifferent to working dogs, but has implemented the FCI IPO program, which has had increasing popularity since the 1970s. In Belgium the hard-core ring trainers broke away from the national FCI club to form the NVBK in 1963. In both Belgium and Holland the IPO program has grown in popularity since the 1970s, drawing some support away from the full protection suit oriented national programs. The necessity of registration papers for IPO competition has been a complication, and there has been a significant amount of falsification of papers to overcome this. The advent of low cost DNA testing technology capable of sorting this out makes future trends increasingly difficult to foresee.

The emergence and enormous immediate popularity of the German Shepherd, and the personal commitment of Max von Stephanitz to working character, as exemplified by his emphasis on herding and police working titles, made this breed

the ultimate police dog in the mind of the public worldwide. This was much more than rhetoric and public relations, these dogs were in the forefront of military and police service internationally after the crushing of the incipient Belgian foundation, the only potential contender, in WW I. But the chasm under the façade was there almost from the beginning; by the early 1920s the division into working and show lines was well established. (Humphrey & Warner, 1934) Over the years there was periodic variation in focus in the German show lines, to some extent according to the influence of the SV president in office. In the post WW II period there was an emphasis on hip dysplasia, resulting in the endurance test (AD) for breeding and formal radiographical examination requirements. Tightened requirements for Schutzhund titles for conformation show placement and breeding took place in this era, and a brief protection examination immediately prior to the Sieger show was instituted. Toward the end of the twentieth century there was a widening separation between working and show lines and while the Schutzhund title continued to be required judging standards for show line dogs were significantly weakened and sometimes falsified. Even in Germany, the separation of the German Shepherd into virtually two breeds is well advanced.

The aggregate result is that worldwide the police and military dogs have become increasingly separated from the mainstream purebred canine world in terms of breeding, training and particularly people. Recent years have seen an increasing number of Malinois based on Dutch and Belgian lines, almost entirely separate from FCI influence, a small but increasing number of Dutch Shepherds and working line German Shepherds, with emphasis on the East German and Czech lines. If the increasing preference for the Malinois persists as a long-term trend the police and military will in effect come to have virtually their own distinct breed, with much less civilian involvement. The fact that the Malinois is so similar in general appearance to the early German Shepherds seems to have prevented a surge in popularity among the general public similar to that of the Doberman or Rottweiler, both of which were propelled to the top in popularity largely because of a strikingly new, bold appearance and the German promotional genius. This lack of civilian popularity would seem to have been a blessing in disguise, for neither the Doberman or Rottweiler have gone beyond image to significant numbers in actual police or military service.

The other breeds which historically played a role in police service over the years – such as the Doberman Pincher, Giant Schnauzer, Boxer, Bouvier des Flandres and Rottweiler – have ceased to be relevant as practical police breeds, and are unlikely ever again to be significant factors.

Until about thirty years ago Schutzhund was directly under the control of the German working dog community through the SV rather than national or international all breed control; rules and judging standards were in general maintained at a high level. IPO was in these earlier years much more of a peripheral, amateur sport oriented program in nations such as France and Belgium where the elite dogs were on ring sport fields. The convergence of the rules and the recent elimination of Schutzhund has been much more in line with the IPO heritage, and represented an important reduction in the influence of the more serious, police oriented training community. Instead of evolving to emphasize enhanced performance in practical aspects for police service, such as longer distance engagements, call outs on remote pursuits and search exercises demanding initiative from the dog and relating to practical police operations, the program has been evolving into tracking obedience, trick obedience and protection obedience where exercises and especially judging expectations more or less irrelevant to actual police service are increasingly the core of the trial.

Much of the success of the police dog in Europe has been the consequence of cooperation between the police canine community and civilian trainers and breeders,

making good dogs of varying levels of training from green pup to certified police dog available at relatively reasonable prices, as exemplified by the Dutch KNPV program. The gradual evolution of Schutzhund into IPO has exacerbated the separation between police and FCI/SV breeding and training, a trend that has gone hand in hand with the emergence of the Malinois as the preeminent police dog. In America, for historical reasons, this spirit of cooperation and community failed to materialize. Police handlers, trainers and administrators in general have very little contact with the European oriented sport programs such as IPO or Ring, and virtually all of it informal, that is individual police trainers or handlers participating on their own time in sport training activities. In contrast to the open KNPV trials in Holland, American police trials and organizations are generally closed to civilians, and police participation in civilian organizations is minimal and unofficial.

While European traditions have prospered based on a flourishing domestic breeding and training culture, America has been dependent on European dogs, often obtained through brokers. The cost of the middleman and transport across an ocean has been significant, but the broker evolved as the pragmatic solution. Police agencies have and sometimes still do send over experienced trainers to purchase dogs, but this is a great expense in terms of time and travel, and even the best police trainer has difficulty in knowing the rapidly varying European lines, where the appropriate dogs are and what the current price structure is. For the police administrator a reputable broker can be the practical choice, provide good dogs as needed at a price reflecting the cost of the service but on the whole reasonable.

In an ongoing relationship the better brokers come to understand the type of dog likely to succeed in a particular department, as there can be significant difference in the appropriate intensity of the dogs according to the experience of department trainers and handlers. The experienced broker can line up dogs according to departmental needs and expectations and stand behind his product, that is, replace dogs which do not work out, even in the occasional instance where the problem might be more the situation than the dog. There are of course dishonest and incompetent people entering the dog brokering business, and the established people do not have to cut corners to make the sale; it is as always a matter of buyer beware.

There are important intangible disadvantages to the imported dogs beyond the cost of overseas transport and the services of the broker. When you buy a dog from Europe all you get is a dog – police handlers and trainers do not gain access to the knowledge and experience of the breeders and trainers, which could contribute so much to effective utilization. If there were local breeding and training communities to supply young dogs the potential police trainers and handlers would have the advantage of seeing the dogs in action with the original trainers, and better understand the breeding, selection and training processes. An active community of amateur trainers would mean that a significant number of police officers would have relevant training experience from civilian life, as young protection sport trainers in many instances tend to gravitate to police service.

Evolution of an effective, indigenous quasi-amateur police dog training and breeding community in America, comparable to the European experience, seems unlikely at this point in time. A small cadre of Schutzhund enthusiasts has gained little real traction over forty years, particularly since there has been virtually no interaction or synergy with the emerging police dog community. It would be very difficult to create a national training and breeding culture as a matter of top down policy, nobody knows how to formulate legislation mandating enthusiasm for local training clubs and instructing that police departments become willing and comfortable in participating. The Europe where this all began a hundred years ago was vastly different from today because of emerging middle and working class economic prosperity, exemplified by common automobile ownership, television and

the internet, have transformed the fabric of society. This cannot and will not just replicate itself in America; to whatever extent we are to succeed in establishing more effective police canine utilization it must come through the evolution of commercial and training traditions and department programs adapted to American circumstances and needs; if we are to do it at all we will have to develop our own way. If effective traditions fail to evolve then usage of police dogs will stagnate or wither, as it has at various times in the past.

It is entirely possible that we are approaching a tipping point, where the century old European culture of amateur and semiprofessional breeding and training as the basis of police service canines becomes obsolete and fades from existence worldwide. Little else in modern society is on such an altruistic basis; the basic tenants of capitalism and free enterprise give little expectation that such activity should persist over time. The truly amateur Schutzhund club in America, never very numerous or prosperous, is increasingly giving way to another model, one based on the business of a professional trainer providing dogs, training and guidance to clients, much as the golf course professional provides instruction to amateur golfers. Indeed, almost from the beginning the American Schutzhund movement was based as much in commerce as the amateur spirit, the purchase of a trained and titled dog was very often the path to becoming a player, an important person. For many it was a professional opportunity, the American entrepreneurial spirit trumping the European pride in the amateur status, the sense of doing something in life beyond money. In the larger view, American entrepreneurial opportunism has infected Europe much more effectively than the European amateur spirit has taken root in America.

Prior to the American civil war manufactured goods were produced by individual craftsman in small shops. Firearms and watches, among the most complex items in common use then, were made one at a time, with the parts carefully adjusted to compensate for variations in the manufacturing process. The quality of the product was the direct result of the skill, passion and pride of the craftsman. The industrial revolution was largely a process of building products on a large scale by putting enough precision in the individual components to make them interchangeable; the skill of the watchmaker or gunsmith gradually gave way to the efficiency of the production line. Today virtually everything is mass-produced, and it is unimaginable that a single craftsman could build a modern automobile, camera or firearm beginning with the raw materials. For untold centuries the small farmer prospered according to his skill in breeding, training and working his horses or other draft animals, but because of mechanization, particularly the tractor, this has given way to larger and larger farms. The farmer was akin to the craftsman in that his success was to a large extent the result of his skill in acquiring, training and using his horses, and this did not easily scale up to several teams, limiting the size of the family farm. The advent of the tractor, and the demise of the horse, took away a fundamental limit on farm size, for tractors and related implements can become larger and more powerful almost without limit and thus enable one or a few men to farm enormous tracts.

The police patrol dog is one of the very few remaining essential commodities primarily produced by the skill, passion and pride of individual men, small-scale breeders and trainers. For well over a century this has worked well in most of Europe because from the beginning there was a community of such men, and because many police handlers were involved in amateur sport activities. But this has been a serious impediment to the growth of American service, because our police agencies have had to pull themselves up by their bootstraps at all levels, especially in knowing how to find and select dogs and train handlers. Our police administrators have typically been men who balance budgets and set up programs to acquire needed resources from reliable, cost effective suppliers. They are used to purchasing things such as squad

cars and radios from competing vendors with well-established reputations, knowledgeable salesman and catalogs listing available products and innumerable options. But when the decision is made to acquire new or replacement patrol dogs there are no catalogs with neat lists of standard models, allowing the selection of a specific sort of dog, or ordering an arbitrary number of identical dogs, for every dog is different in ways that are difficult for the non-involved administrator to grasp and integrate into the purchase decision process.

To a significant extent the brokers and importers have helped to bridge this gap, provided the knowledge and connections to match up available dogs with suitable positions, but importing one dog at a time is inherently an expensive approach. Many brokers also produce litters and sell dogs varying in age and training, but the problem remains that these are derivative operations, the real breeding programs – the years and generations of experience – remain in Europe. American distributors generally lack the depth of breeding knowledge and hands on training experience that is the long-term basis of a successful breeding program.

General dissatisfaction with this mode of operation is evident from the various breeding programs established from time to time by various government agencies, with varying degrees of success. Two current examples are the Royal Canadian Mounted Police breeding Czech line German Shepherds and the American military with their ongoing Malinois breeding program at Lackland Air Force Base. The key problem is the socialization and development of the young dogs; they cannot just be kept clean and well fed in kennel runs until two years of age, for each one requires individual human contact in order to develop a fully functional working dog character. The American program in Texas farms out the Malinois pups into volunteer homes for the critical early months, but depending on local volunteers does not scale well, that is limits the number of young dogs in the pipe line at any one time.

The most difficult aspect of predicting the future of the police dog is the ongoing evolution of American society, especially our legal system. The police canine surge in America has largely been the result of our ongoing, all-consuming war on drugs. American incarceration rates are almost twice those of any other nation in the world, including Communist China, the primary reason being people imprisoned for drug offences, many relatively minor. It seems unlikely that we can go on spending more money on California's penal system than the educational system; it is simply not sustainable. Increasing numbers of Americans are coming to believe that just as it was impossible to prevent the widespread consumption of alcohol as we attempted through prohibition, it is also impossible to eliminate or even contain recreational drug usage.

The legalization and regulation of recreational drugs would have dramatic impact on American police operations, especially canine units which evolved primarily as an integral part of our war on drugs. Ever tightening budgets would cause police agency restructuring, with difficult to predict consequences for canine deployment. The substantial money from confiscation of automobiles and other drug traffic paraphernalia that today flows into police operational budgets would dry up. Police canine deployment would likely shrink to that justifiable by other services, such as building searches, explosive detection and crime scene service.

Over the past century there has been enormous expansion and evolution in police canine service. Twentieth century technology – vehicle based police patrol, modern firearms, ubiquitous communication (voice and digital), and computer networks linking agencies nationally and internationally – has transformed police service, especially canine applications. The police dog evolved as the partner of the isolated foot patrol officer on tough city streets, often without a firearm, who came to rely on his dog to indicate the presence of the potential adversary or criminal and provide physical intimidation and a fighting partner in a violent confrontation. In spite of

incredible advances in technology, the dog has remained indispensable, but his role has evolved to put much more focus on substance detection and directed search. In spite of decades of research, no modern instrument has the detection and discriminatory power to identify hidden drugs or explosive material, and no practical alternatives for building or area searches have evolved or appear on the horizon.

Although evolving social conditions and deployment tactics – and amazing advances in communications, vehicles and weapons – have revolutionized police service the canine role has continually evolved and expanded. This noble service would seem destined to persist into the foreseeable future, continually evolving in response to changing real world circumstances, but ultimately based on the unique blending of human and canine nature that has been the basis of the partnership between man and dog since the advent of civilization.

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