



In less than a generation the German Shepherd has lost preeminence in police service and in the minds and hearts of the German people. That this is cause and effect is beyond question; the pervasive aura of vigor, aggression and virility was from the beginning what created enthusiasm in the homeland and around the world, generated the universal allure of owning your own police dog.

Precipitating this decline was pervasive deviation from the foundation principle of Max von Stephanitz, that form must follow function, that excellence on the street must be the ultimate criteria of structure and stride as well as the instinctive propensities and moral attributes of the police dog.

This ongoing three way sundering of the breed—ornamental, sport or play and police—is the harbinger of death.

The underlying cause of this evolving tragedy is overweening power in the hands of the effete show dog establishment to the exclusion of serious working breeders and trainers.

Yet today the Malinois prospers in a market essentially free of establishment control of breeding selection with each individual empowered to choose according to his own inclinations and experience, subject only to the will of the market.

Redemption for the German Shepherd can only be found in empowerment of the breeder and trainer, in a new balance between dictatorship and anarchy.



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Power Corrupts

That power tends to corrupt—and that absolute power corrupts absolutely—has from the beginning been a deeply ingrained facet of human nature. The enormous power in the hands of the purebred establishment—as in the SV, VDH and FCI—has brought our police service breeds in general and the German Shepherd in particular to the brink of collapse.

The inherent paradox of our social institutions—be they nations, churches or canine governing entities—is that in order to provide stability, services, order and social progress the necessary power over the individual, the restraint of anarchy, tends to create condescending bureaucracy and the suppression of the personal initiative which is the wellspring of prosperity and vigor. The mantra of the establishment much too often is that to serve the people you must control the people, save them from themselves.

But it is the common experience that the best government is the least government and that institutions lacking effective recourse for the rank and file relentlessly seek to wield ever more power, ostensibly in order to do more good but actually in the pursuit of private agendas. This is most onerous in long standing entities dominated by an elite cabal such as a communist regime, the Catholic Church or the SV, the German Shepherd mother club. More open institutions, as in liberal democracies, are through the electoral process to a significant extent constrained by the citizenry and thus less subject to overbearing repression emanating from on high.

Providing a viable balance between anarchy and dictatorship is thus the most difficult challenge of governance in all human institutions, and entrenched lack of such balance in national and international canine entities such as the FCI, AKC and SV is at the root of the strife and discord—and the ongoing collapse of annual registrations—before us today.

Power can indeed corrupt, tending to lead those wielding it to seek private ends and to bend law and policy according to personal benefit rather than the common good. All too often petty agents and officials, deep in the bowels of the labyrinth, come to possess unfettered potential to capriciously suppress individual rights and privileges and extract bribes—in many forms—for the services they are employed to provide. In American cities the need to pass cash to the building inspector and other public servants is all too often endemic, an entrenched part of the system.

The rationale for tightly controlled top down social structures—such as a communist regime, a military unit or the SV—is that left to their own devices men have the propensity to make diverse choices according to their perceived self-interest rather than the common good, a deeply entrenched survival mechanism.

And there are of course circumstances where this is necessary and appropriate as in military service which would be impossible without a strong, responsive chain of command and individual soldiers trained intensively—indoctrinated—to respond in a prescribed and obedient manner, as in a close order drill.

But there are many other endeavors that rely on the creativity, initiative, empowerment and agency of the individual. The nature of scientific research, technical innovation, product and process development, marketing, dog breeding and artistic creation is such that the process must be unfettered, that most innovative ideas, like seeds

scattered to the wind, fall on unfertile soil and thus fail to germinate. But on occasion an Isaac Newton, Henry Ford or Bill Gates can make a leap, discover a new aspect of science or engineering innovation and bring real change, a step up in prosperity for mankind as a whole. Such things do not come from committees, ranks of commissars or roving squads of breed wardens.

Difficulties inevitably arise when creativity is subjected to military like discipline, as in a communist state, where innovations such as the production line, the personal computer or the three point tractor hitch would have been lost in the fog of bureaucracy, which instinctively protects the current way of doing things, the existing order.

It is thus quite evident that the ongoing failure of the SV is due primarily to the fact that it is run from the top down like a military battalion for the benefit of the insiders rather from the ground up with priority on the empowerment and agency of the individual contributors, the boots on the ground working breeders and trainers.

Rather than providing support and empowerment the focus is on regulation and control, the imposition of putative wisdom, imagined expertise and supposed best practices applied through the duress of a cadre of bureaucrats, judges, commissars and breed wardens.

While it may be true that a centrally controlled economy—or breeding program—will prevent or abort ill-conceived ventures, it is also and much more importantly true that the process it will stifle quality of life and progress. What advancement for mankind came of the communist regime of the Soviet Union? What benefit has come of the last half century of SV stewardship?

Origins

On the broad northern European plane stockmen sustained and nurtured landraces of herd tending dogs according to prevailing circumstance and local tradition for generation upon generation, millennia, by the expedient of breeding and training the most effective and reliable herd guardians. There were no overbearing breed wardens or suffocating bureaucrats inflicting endless impediment, all of which was to emerge later under the guise of progress.



But by the late nineteenth century this was in decline as agrarian Europe was morphing into an incipient industrial age and the herdsman's dogs, as well as the herdsman and his flocks, were vanishing because low priced mutton and wool was coming from places such as Australia and Argentina which meant that livestock production on the unfenced fields and meadows of the homelands was no longer viable; the age old northern European tending heritage was coming to an end.

But there was a way for salvation: flourishing industrial cities were in need of uniformed police presence in working class districts where the patrolman on his beat was alone and vulnerable, most especially at night, in an era prior to motorized patrol, effective street lighting or two way radio communication.



A police patrol dog had the potential to provide credible presence and deterrence and to alert to a hidden adversary, especially in the dark. These tending dogs of the herdsmen—Belgian and German alike—would ultimately prove ideal and thus attain salvation and domination; but this was held in abeyance for several decades as they remained unnoticed on fields and meadows, lacking the visibility that could be provided as a formal breed bringing them to the attention of police authorities, which beginning in the 1870s were focused on existing breeds such as the English Collie, the Great Dane and the Airedale Terrier.

The Purebred

For untold generations the herding lines had been passed down within extended families and among regional herdsman according to oral tradition and community experience. Those in need, if not having a candidate from their own breeding, were able to draw on this in seeking and acquiring a pup.

The coming of the industrial age and the transformation of herding dogs into police dogs could not in general rely on these informal ways of procurement; urban police departments, lacking rural ties, were likely to purchase pups or young dogs from quasi commercial kennels, which required a means of certification of suitability which went beyond personal relationships. This was to be one of the purposes of the purebred paradigm.

The canine world was transformed by the advent of the formal breed—commencing with the British Kennel Club in 1873—complete with stud books, conformation shows, working trials and cadres of self-righteous middle class dilators, newfound experts, creating standards out of thin air and capriciously dictating acceptable coat texture and color. There is no mention of the herdsman being consulted, just as input from hands on working breeders and trainers is disdained even today, most especially by the SV show line establishment.

It would be most of a generation before the emergence of national clubs for the shepherd's dogs, in September of 1891 for the Belgians and April of 1899 for the German Shepherd. This was to be transformative, provide a viable process for bringing the herding lines into police service and working and middle class homes. The alternative was extermination.

Whether all of this was an entirely a good thing remains as an open question; it was perhaps a necessary adaption to changing times, but in a way it was the end of innocence in that bureaucracies inevitably engender evil along with the good. More here: [The Purebred Dog](#)



Max von Stephanitz

Founder's Touch

Max von Stephanitz created the SV in order to produce **Police trial Champions out of Exhibition Champions** and to this end instituted the Schutzhund trial as the foundation breeding prerequisite. Although the perceived prestige of the conformation ring was from the beginning a powerful attraction for many, the early working breeders were on the whole free to choose, to make breeding selections according to their experience on the training and trial field and in street service.

In the early years this provided a viable balance between freedom and authority and by the 1920s, bolstered by WWI service, the German Shepherd had emerged as the premier police dog throughout the world. But recent decades have seen the incessant erosion of this balance of power, the SV evolving in a way similar to Eastern European communist regimes, imposing "best practices" and "expert central planning" resulting in overweening, intrusive control rendering the nominal breeders little more than nurse maids and care takers, the lower class kennel help not to be trusted with decision making.

The similarity is uncanny. Although communism promises to unite the people as egalitarian comrades and take the means of production into community hands the actual, inevitable, result was and is ubiquitous, soul crushing repression snuffing out individual initiative, creativity and the occasional burst of genius and luck which drive progress, innovation and prosperity. Inventions such as the personal computer or the microwave oven did not emerge in communist East Germany.

Power to the People

On the other side of this coin, in every sphere of human experience, economic and social power in the hands of the people as a whole—free enterprise—engenders innovation and creativity and thus vigor to the benefit of all.



The SV may not be marching recalcitrant breeders or insubordinate officials into Siberia bound box cars, but the domination from on high is nevertheless relentless even when applied with the velvet glove rather than the iron fist. But the result remains: the emasculation and ongoing decline of the legacy of von Stephanitz in terms of registrations and suitability for police service, the reason for the breed in the first place.

In a broader perspective the purebred paradigm, through national and international kennel and breed clubs in general and the SV in particular, has evolved and conspired to inflict onerous control over breeding to the detriment of vigor and working efficacy in real world police service.

The primary overt manifestation of this is the conformation ring which incessantly evolves bizarre fashion and grotesque style, ultimately producing fragile breeds with faulty physiques inherently prone to disabling faults such as structural back problems. However stylish this may be such dogs are inherently incompatible with real world on the

street efficacy. Examples include the foreshortened Boxer muzzle or the extreme angulation and toe dragging gait of the SV show ring.

This imposition of overbearing control—inflicted with profound ignorance of and apathy to police service—is the root cause of the precipitous decline of the German Shepherd. This millstone on the neck of working breeders—who should have an unfettered hand on the tiller rather than serve as lackeys of avaricious club officials—sucks the lifeblood out of the breed and the heritage. The ultimate irony is of course that there can be any other kind than working breeders, that German Shepherds can somehow be bred as useless ornaments without the least pretense of the functionality which inspired von Stephanitz.

This all pervasive institutional hegemony is lauded as the modern, superior and benevolent paradigm for breed vigor and prosperity. Yet where it is applied most incessantly the German Shepherd is in precipitous decline as a working breed and in the minds and hearts of the German people; and the breed least subject to the process, the Malinois, is in vigorous ascendance.

How can this be?

The answer is self-evident to all who can look beyond self-interest: this condescending micromanagement fails because it denies and subverts the most fundamental precepts of von Stephanitz, that form must follow function, that the German Shepherd must be first and foremost a police dog. That the correct physique is that superior in the most demanding work, police work, rather than the fashion of the show ring. That the dog most reliable and effective in his daily work is the best dog and most breeding worthy dog in terms of physique as well as character.

Rock of von Stephanitz

The Schutzhund trial was the rock upon which Max von Stephanitz built his legacy, the German Shepherd dog. For well over a century it withstood the test of time—until the SV, to their everlasting shame, repudiated it and the police dog heritage in 2022, a year destined to stand in infamy.

For decades they had been shamelessly pandering, marketing the breed as a prosaic family pet, a second rate, emasculated and pathetic German replica of the Golden and Labrador retrievers, sinking to the lowest common denominator in order to broaden the marketing base. The web site has devolved into a vast wasteland of blatant, obsequious pet dog pandering in denial of the police legacy, with not a photo in sight of a dog engaging a man.



In forsaking this founding, breed defining trial they have finally crossed the Rubicon. [SV Abandons Schutzhund](#)

To add insult to injury they have conjured yet another hopelessly pathetic shell game—a "Breeding Predisposition Test" (ZAP) — as a fig leaf to cover their treachery. This is essentially a variant of the shopworn temperament test scam in which show breeders employ one another as

"temperament testers" for the laying of hands, anointing mind dead show dogs as fit for breeding without the inconvenience of training or the risk of further public scorn. Real trainers rightly hold this in utter contempt.

These so-called character tests have long been promoted and deployed, have a history of easing the transition of credible working breeds into oblivion. Such tests are based on the premise that training is actually unnecessary, and is in fact an impediment to effective breeding selection. The thesis is that by devising clever tests for the natural or untrained response we can see the true nature and potential, unhindered by human manipulation, thus gaining a more accurate insight as well as avoiding the time, cost and effort of training. In this view of the canine world, training serves to unnaturally conceal and cover over the essence of the dog. It is of course patent nonsense, efficacy produced through training is the essence of the utility and value of the police dog and the ultimate testament to his quality. [Temperament Testing](#)

None of this should come as any surprise, their treachery was quite apparent when they abandoned Schutzhund in favor of IPO in 2012, leaving breeding character evaluation of the German Shepherd dog in the hands of the candy-ass FCI show breeders.

For decades, as the show lines morphed into increasingly effete absurdity, they had been systematically compromising and trivializing the Schutzhund trial in order to accommodate their pathetic banana backed monstrosities. The scaling wall became the A frame to compensate for eroding athleticism. The stick was padded, and there was incessant pressure to do away with it entirely. The attack on the handler and the turn on the long bite were eliminated because they were proving too intimidating, and publically embarrassing, for these elite show lines.

And where even this was not sufficiently lenient they systematically bestowed fraudulent titles in secret show dog special trials, often unannounced, mid-week and very private. (A practice also common—added and abetted by Christa Bremmer—among German DVG judges in America in earlier years.)

Appeasement

European green party or animal rights activists have for decades posed an existential threat to our working dog culture and heritage. These activists are at root pathetic, arrogant, spineless bullies obsessed with the visceral pleasure of flaunting righteous indignation, inflicting pain and humiliation on those who cannot effectively fight back. And like all bullies they are never satisfied, the thrill of inflicting pain—the despoliation of generations of heritage—leads only to the desire for more.

The early focus was on rendering ear cropping and tail docking illegal, in which they were through a strategy of divide and conquer, particularly in Germany, successful. The German Shepherd people were on the whole perfectly willing to throw the involved breeds under the bus without bothering to look back, not a particularly admirable moment.

The cropping and docking bans had significant detrimental consequences for a number of breeds, particularly among the hunting dogs. This was as one specific instance a critical nail in the coffin of the Doberman Pincher. Going forward the lesson for the rights activists was quite clear, that we are hopelessly vulnerable to even the most blatant divide and conquer gambit.

Of deeper concern was and is a small but shrill, self-righteous and persistent cadre of self-appointed breed spokesmen proclaiming that to "save the breed or sport" we must acquiesce to each atrocity, in effect own up to our guilt and then creep away shamefaced with our tail between our legs, hoping that they will somehow be satisfied, but they never are.

The point of no return is the elimination of the stick blows in the Schutzhund trial. The mantra of the apologists is that the stick is a battle that cannot be won but that we can go on just fine, did not really need it. Just as they said we do not need the prong collar, the scaling wall, the attack on the handler and the rest of the litany. And when they come for the A frame and the one meter jump and eventually dogs biting people on the grounds that such things are too dangerous and strenuous in a family home they will no doubt proclaim that in this modern era there is no real reason for German Shepherd aggression or agility, that such things are no longer relevant in the new pet dog era.

How we could expect to win the inevitable next battle is the issue that is never addressed; apparently the hope being that if we are subservient and obsequious enough they will somehow lose interest and go off to harass those sporting enough to put up real resistance.

Beyond the ominous expectation that appeasement tends to be a slippery slope is the more serious threat from the enemy within, the show dog elements of the SV which for so many years have been plotting and conniving hand in with the activists to eliminate the Schutzhund trial as a breeding prerequisite.

Medical Magic

In the 1950's and 60's the proliferation of crippling canine hip dysplasia could no longer be ignored. Although many breeders were in denial, fearing the implication of their breeding stock and the resultant losses in financial terms and prestige, the defective hips and thus the crippled dogs were primarily being propagated through genetic inheritance. The obvious remedy was to eliminate those dogs exhibiting external symptoms or whose hips were deemed faulty through the use of radiographic examination applied as a screening mechanism for breeding selection. [Medical Screening](#)

This brought much benefit. The certification of breeding stock as dysplasia free by agencies such as the *Orthopedic Foundation of America* (OFA) and various European entities, particularly the SV, gradually became the standard of breeder responsibility as a result of statistical evidence and a general perception of a broad improvement in the aggregate hip status of many breeds.

But the rest of the story is that this is classic avoidance behavior. For hundreds of thousands of years the grey wolf prospered because natural selection rather than human intervention precluded the unfit from propagating. Fitness among the domesticated herding dogs was maintained in a similar way in that those found wanting were also precluded from procreating.

The underlying cause of this proliferation of disabling genetic defects was and is the emergence of the purebred show dog, which lives and propagates in the kennel generation upon generation with no necessity of fitness, with perhaps a brief exposure in the show ring and then a breeding career, with never a requirement of serious physical exertion or any other pretense or demonstration of practical utility.

Even more insidious was the propensity to select for grotesque but ever more fashionable style contrary to nature, dogs physically unable to prosper in a normal or working environment as exemplified by the SV show lines. When these man made malformations led to a proliferation of crippling back defects—*Lumbar-Sacral Transitional Vertebrae (LTV)*—rather than perceiving the wakeup call for a return to more natural and functional structure the SV response was to double down with yet another costly and burdensome screening program. [SV in Denial](#)

Thus as unrelenting extremes in physique and moral degeneration bring forth the inevitable functional defects the remedy is invariably yet another onerous health, conformation or character certification program with the associated cost and bureaucratic burden. Yet they never quite seem to be able to connect the dots, grasp that the root cause is the incessant pressure for ever more extreme physique, that the solution is a return to a more natural structure and stride. It is like living the movie *Groundhog Day*.

We need to return to our roots. The working trial was and should still be the foundation of breed integrity and vigor, should be sufficient in and of itself. When generation after generation of working titled dogs were producing viable police candidates and vigorous civilian companions there was no real justification for the burden of universal screening. The problem is that one way or another—watering down the rules, judges with the persistent blind eye or a nice trial around the breakfast table filling out the paper work—the show breeders were circumventing the rigors of the trial, thus creating the opportunity for these serious genetic faults to evolve and propagate.

If the trial today is inadequate, and the many modifications accommodating show dog frailty over the years have in fact resulted in this, then the answer is longer, harder, more rigorous, more intimidating decoy pressure, rather than further watering it down and conjuring more burdensome and ineffectual screening requirements.

Bring back the scaling wall, the reed stick, the attack on the handler and the turn on the long bite. Become even more demanding; introduce a recall on the long bite and extensive distractions in obedience, such as food on the field or a game of catch as a distraction. Who can deny that that would have been the consul of von Stephanitz?

None of this is meant to imply that we should turn our back on ongoing medical progress as in vaccination for endemic disease or the proliferation of diagnostic tools, but such things, the cost and the potential benefit, should ultimately be at the discretion of breeders free to choose rather than dictated by the bureaucrats. Working efficacy, on the trial field and street, must be the ultimate arbitrator of excellence, of breeding selection.

Emergence of the Malinois

As the Second World War drew to a close the Malinois, the short coated variety of the Belgian Shepherd, and other Belgian breeds such as the Bouvier des Flanders were at low ebb in terms of numbers and viability. This was a consequence of the Nazi atrocity, the invasion and then an incredibly brutal occupation. Stagnation would extend through most of a generation to the latter 1950s, with in some instances ongoing existence in question.

Yet somehow this Malinois emerged from the ashes to drive the German Shepherds off of French Ring fields in the 1970s, become a robust presence on Euro IPO fields and international competition in the 1980s and 90s and then establish a vital presence on American IPO fields and especially in police service at the dawn of the twenty first century.

How was this possible?

There are of course complexities, but the high level perspective is that they managed to evade much of the suffocating intrusion of the conformation oriented national establishments in the various nations. This played out in various ways:

- The Belgian working community bolted en masse from the national FCI club, St. Hubert, in 1963 to establish their own national club, the NVBK, which more than any other development engendered the emergence of the Malinois as a world class working breed. This was especially influential in France and Germany.
- The Netherlands police canine community established the KNPV as an independent entity 1907, with substantial involvement of senior police administrators, providing complete freedom from breed club interference.
- The French Ring people from the beginning had staked out a relatively independent relationship with the conformation establishment, insuring working breeders the freedom to breed according to working potential. (The demise of the German Shepherd in French Ring was due largely to the imposition of German style breeding controls by the French GSD club.)



Free to choose worked for these Malinois advocates because they had created the opportunity and then exercised the wisdom and courage to choose excellence.

Today the Malinois prospers in a laissez-faire world largely free of oppression, a growing litany of increasingly expensive medical tests, intrusive opinion based evaluations by hovering breed wardens, phony temperament and character tests run by profoundly ignorant show breeders and all of the rest of it. Each breeder and trainer is empowered with a firm hand on his own tiller, able to choose his own destiny. Medical screening is according to decisions on cost and effectiveness, rather than dictated by

bureaucrats, constrained only by customers free to choose for themselves which breeding program to patronize.

Freedom from pervasive, onerous micromanagement—with the Belgian NVBK, Dutch KNPV and French ring communities providing national administration and more or less independent breeding pools—has brought prosperity and resilience to the working culture of the breed as a whole.

Throughout Europe the Malinois is bred with minimal constraint or control, and the process inevitably produces mediocrity and worse. Many aspiring breeders go on to demonstrate their own ineptitude, sometimes with great persistence. But the transformative breeders cannot be known beforehand, there is no way to identify those with the insight, courage, luck, intuition and other mysterious attributes of a gifted breeder and

trainer except to let nature take its course and only then separate the wheat from the chaff.

Although free enterprise is in some ways inherently inefficient and unfair the fact remains that it has proven superior to any of the alternatives—such as socialism—that mankind has devised. Breeding by the free and encumbered choice of working breeders, men and women with boots on the ground, will from time to time produce poor specimens and go up blind alleys, but it is what brought forth these breeds in the first place and the only viable means of ongoing vigor and prosperity.

Free to Choose

As an American with a pervasive propensity to seek understanding of how things work in all senses—physical, historical and according to human nature—our history can only be truly comprehended in the context of our founding contradiction between the assertion that all men are created equal and that the institution of slavery was embedded and secured in our constitution.

As crisis loomed the words of Abraham Lincoln rang out:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot long endure, permanently half slave and half free."

This led to war.

The German Shepherd was also burdened with a founding contradiction which over a century festered and in time emerged as the existential threat to enduring relevance. Even though this is perhaps of lesser inherent gravity than human enslavement the breed cannot long endure permanently half show and half work.

This is so intertwined with the rise of the Malinois that a discussion of one to the exclusion of the other would be pointless, for no man or breed is an island. Throughout most of the twentieth century the Shepherd was the police dog and a police dog was a German Shepherd. In America the Malinois was virtually unknown, even within the emerging Schutzhund community. Even in Belgium, for complex social and historical reasons, the German Shepherd had a dominant presence in police service.

But by the dawn of the twenty first century the Malinois was emerging—seemingly out of nowhere—to contend for dominance on sport fields and in police service everywhere. If these trends persist the Malinois will emerge as the definitive police dog and the German Shepherds will become little more than prosaic pet and play show dogs, a tragic final act in the epic odyssey of Max von Stephanitz.

Our premise, that freedom of choice must be according to a fragile balance between dictatorship and anarchy, is embodied in the breeds we see before us. One prospered for a century, yet fell under the sway of an ongoing dictatorial cabal and lost its way and the other has had anarchy inflicted by the accidents of history and foreign oppression, at times at the door of extinction, yet somehow emerging in unforeseeable prosperity.

Yet neither breed is truly secure, for diametrically opposing reasons. The Shepard is in dire straits with a real possibility that the entrenched old guard will hang on, believing that if they stay their course they can go on indefinitely with their increasingly pathetic Sieger shows, marketing the "winners" to wealthy and naive foreigners until the whole thing finally collapses out of sheer absurdity.

While under less immediate duress the Malinois advocates eventually need to establish a comprehensive international structure free of the FCI and other manifestations of conformation oriented hegemony. In particular cooperative arrangements with the NVBK and the KNPV, including in the former case mutual recognition of pedigrees and registration, could establish real, unfettered intercourse with the FCI affiliates, leading to a comprehensive union incorporating all of the real players and mitigating external delirious influence and control.

The survival of the German Shepherd hangs precariously in the balance, demands transformation, real power in the hands of working trainers and breeders. The escalating, century old conflict between work and show is enervating, must be resolved once and for all by setting performance standards and enforcement at a level such that show breeders become working breeders or former breeders.

The ongoing show dog circus, having spawned the infamous banana backs, is a public relations disaster drawing scorn from the press, those knowledgeable of canine structure and even much of the purebred community. The rejection by the public at large has gone hand in hand with collapsing registrations worldwide, bringing forth so much consternation that in 2011 the AKC, like an ostrich with his head in the sand, ceased publishing annual registration statistics. [Decline of the Purebred](#)

Appearance does of course matter and a bold, handsome, clearly defined type is just as essential in terms of public recognition, deference and respect as the uniform of the police officer himself. To this end there is need of a comprehensive process fostering structure and stride in the spirit of von Stephanitz, that is form according to function as in excellence in the police patrol role. The era of effete fashion as an empty façade has lingered much too long, bringing the breed to the brink of perdition.

Abandoning the Schutzhund trial as the criteria for breeding selection was the straw that will break the camel's back, will mark the beginning of the end unless rescinded. The trial needs to be reestablished on old school principals according to contemporary requirements of police service. Other administrative impediments to breeding must be reexamined and severely curtailed, particularly in regard to cost and inconvenience, putting the breeder under the least possible restraint, free to choose according to his own experience, insight and vision.

In order to establish a culture of integrity the breeding qualification trial would, rather than at the handler's discretion, be at a specific time and place with a designated judge rather than at a club trial with a familiar decoy and selected judge. Rigorously applied this would put an end to the routine certification of grossly inadequate dogs, the show dog special trials.

The salvation of the German Shepherd demands that breeding selection, in terms of both character and physique, must be according to excellence in on the street police service. Applied with rigor over time such a program can insure correct structure, stride and moral attributes. In this way the crucible of time and diligence, the rigor of vigorous, physically demanding working trials and the aggregate lessons of street service can insure a reliable and cost efficient supply of police potential candidates also stable and sure enough for competent civilian homes.

Vibrant working breeds are created and carried on through the passion and struggle of individual breeders and trainers. National kennel and breed clubs can and should provide services, that is maintain records,

certify judges, establish rules and define procedures. But when they do more, micromanage breeding with an intrusive and heavy hand, they inevitably do much less, become a hindrance to the heritage rather than a benevolent, progressive force.

We must let the market decide, with those seeking a pup or young dog selecting according to their own knowledge, instinct and experience, the reputations of those offering pups and the council of advisors of their own choosing. There will of course be poor choices, blind allies. But this is inevitable, the way of the world, and a few will find a way forward, persist, bring innovation and progress. And others will see their light and follow; ugly and ungainly as it is this is how mankind has always progressed, how we should go about breeding working dogs. Free enterprise is an inherently ugly and unfair process, its one redeeming feature being that it is the only one that actually works.

In order to stem this tide of decline correct conformation must be reestablished in terms of real world street service rather than the political play world of the effete show ring. This devolution of structure and stride in the ring rather than evolution on the street is our original sin, which von Stephanitz struggled with from the beginning and which emerged as predominant after his passing. This remains unabated today.

Breeders and trainers free to choose, in control of their own destiny, are and must be the basis for the ongoing vitality. In order to survive and prosper we must bring forth the wisdom and courage necessary to preserve and protect this freedom. This is our obligation to the founders, ourselves and most importantly to those who will come after us.

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Background and Reference

Glossary

[Decline and Fall of the House of von Stephanitz](#)

[Who Owns the House of von Stephanitz?](#)

[German Shepherd Police Service Legacy](#)

[Dictatorship or Anarchy?](#)

[Working Dog Organizations: Structure and Ongoing Conflict](#)

[German Shepherd Police Dog Heritage Repudiated](#)

[SV Abandons Work Test for Breeding](#)

[AWDF, Stillborn American Elite](#)

[Supreme Authority of the Canine World](#)

[Emergence of a new Canine World Order](#)

[American Consequences of the WUSV Vindication](#)

[Meltdown in America](#)

[Legacy Lost, the Other Breeds](#)

[Temperament or Character Testing](#)

[Jack of All Trades?](#)

[Style and Opinion Sports](#)

[The Commercialization of Schutzhund](#)

[How We Play the Game](#)

[Only a Game](#)

[The Herding Canard](#)

[The Mother State](#) 2016

Web presence:

[Schutzhund America](#)

[Ongoing FCI / WUSV Strife](#)

Much more historical detail can be found in my police dog book:

[The Police Dog: Evolution, History and Service](#)

Conacts & References