

Imperial Era

January 18, 1871 marks the beginning of the German Empire. The empire was a union of the imperial princes and the free imperial cities. In the authoritarian system of authority of the Empire, the Emperor and his Imperial Chancellor were in charge. The citizens were regarded merely as subjects who had to obey the orders of the state. This strict regime of aristocratic circles stood in stark contrast to the growing self-confidence of a strengthening labor force.

Many of the empire's constables and police officers, like their predecessors, came from the military. These people were not known for their diplomatic dealings with ordinary people, and after all, they did not need to be, since their mission was to rigidly implement the will of the state.

The police officer of the imperial period, if he did not belong to the officer level, was a poorly paid and not trained for his profession. The knowledge for the job was looked up from "old hands" who had been on duty for some time. It was not until 1901, less than two decades before the fall of the empire, that the first Prussian police school opened.

During the imperial era, the severely deficient opportunity to acquire professional skills was countered by an excess of different, sometimes very demanding tasks to be performed due to a multitude of local ordinances. The imperial constable was equally responsible for the regulation of road traffic and law enforcement as for the orderly running of weekly markets, the supervision of mortuary affairs, the monitoring of commercial hostels and non-marital cohabitation, but also for the supervision of construction, the monitoring of hygiene and health, and even the censorship of public theater performances.