The meanings of restriction: the *Heydt Rescript* of 1859 and German migrations to Brazil*

Os significados da restrição: o Rescrito de Heydt *de 1859 e as migrações alemãs para o Brasil*

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Abstract: On 3 November 1859, the Kingdom of Prussia decreed the so-called Heydt Rescript, a circular that curtailed propaganda and private emigration drives from Prussian lands to Brazil. In line with the assessment of nineteenth-century observers, scholars have long understood the Rescript as a singularly restrictive measure that directly responded to reports of abuse against German *colonos* culminating in the sharecroppers' rebellion (*revolta dos parceiros*) of 1856-1857. However, a number of factors suggest that, beyond Brazil, other Prussian concerns of both a domestic and international political nature motivated the Heydt Rescript. Beginning with the life trajectory of the decree's author, trade minister August von der Heydt, this article surveys the context that preceded and underpinned the Heydt Rescript in order to show how Prussian military imperatives, economic overtures in Asia, and government changes dovetailed into a multifaceted migration restriction that remained in place until the end of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Heydt Rescript. August von der Heydt. Kingdom of Prussia. sharecroppers' rebellion.

Resumo: Em 3 de novembro de 1859, o Reino da Prússia decretou o chamado *Rescrito de Heydt*, uma circular que restringiu a propaganda e as ini-

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ciativas privadas de emigração de regiões prussianas para o Brasil. Em linha com a avaliação de observadores no século XIX, a pesquisa acadêmica há muito encara o *Rescrito* como uma medida singularmente restritiva, que respondia diretamente às denúncias de abuso contra colonos alemães, motivadoras da revolta dos parceiros de 1856-1857. Contudo, diversos fatores sugerem que, além do Brasil, outras preocupações prussianas, de natureza política nacional e internacional, motivaram o *Rescrito de Heydt*. Começando com a trajetória de vida do autor do decreto – o ministro do comércio August von der Heydt –, este artigo examina o contexto que precedeu e fundamentou o *Rescrito de Heydt*, de modo a mostrar como imperativos militares prussianos, oportunidades econômicas na Ásia e mudanças governamentais imiscuíram-se naquela restrição migratória multifacetada, que permaneceu em vigor até o final do século XIX.

Palavras-chave: Rescrito de Heydt. August von der Heydt. Reino da Prússia. Revolta dos parceiros.

JEL: F54. F66. N43. K37. N36.

Introduction

In one of many study sketches carried out by the artist Adolph Menzel in 1860 for a commissioned painting, August von der Heydt's semblance conveys an air of enigma, to say the least (Figure 1). His left shoulder at twenty degrees from the center, his back to the viewer, close-cropped hair and ceremonial epaulets—here is not so much a draft portrait but a suggestive relief of the Prussian minister of trade in the act of witnessing a signal event casting a dim light over his visage. The event in question is the 1861 coronation of Wilhelm I, who rose to the Prussian crown after serving as prince regent for his ailing brother for three years in an ostensible "new era" that ushered in his accession. Positioned sideways, von der Heydt's image suggests the complexities involved, the transitions and transactions that characterized this momentous political change. As a conservative businessman and longtime minister, von der Heydt had enjoyed the previous monarch's sympathies and graces, but his relationship with the new head of state remained untested. Hence the minister's appearance as if in expectation, a patient onlooker waiting on the wings of change, and no less a deft politician in suspended animation, caught in the middle of one monarch's passing and the rise of another. Turned away from the spectator, the rendering also serves as a fitting allegory for how historians of Brazil have contemplated von der Heydt as the author of the Brazil-bound migration restriction known as the Heydt Rescript of 1859: focusing on the deed itself, nineteenth century histories of migration regard the man and his context elliptically if at all, as with a similar side glance.

Figure 1 – Adolph Menzel, "Minister of State von der Heydt. Study for the painting 'Coronation of Wilhelm I in Königsberg'" (1864), *Kupferstichkabinett* (Museum of Prints and Drawings), *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* (State Museums in Berlin).

Yet, a closer and more frontal consideration of von der Heydt and his political world may throw new light on the circular he decreed on 3 Nov. 1859, which presumably put a damper on emigration to Brazil, at that point one of the top receiving societies for German migrations (*Königlich Preußischer Staats-Anzeiger*, 1859, p. 2059-2060). Scholars assume that the Heydt Rescript, as the circular was known, resulted directly from longstanding claims of abuses suffered by German *colonos* in Brazil, which is the most plausible, but by no means only, explanation. The egregious treatment suffered by German-speaking migrants in Brazil, particularly in São Paulo, came to a head in a quickly defused local mobilization of sharecroppers at Ibicaba in 1856-1857 later known as the sharecroppers' rebellion (*revolta dos parceiros*). Although relatively minor, the event rose to prominence due to the numerous paper trails it incited. On the one hand, the Vergueiro family, who owned the plantations where the sharecroppers lived and worked, wrote incessantly to provincial and central government authorities to request military aid, justifying such a petition with dire warnings of a massive communist rebellion allegedly also involving the enslaved.[1] On the other hand, Swiss federal authorities organized an inquest into the event, with its envoy, Dr. Jakob Heusser, traveling around *paulista fazendas* to conduct interviews and inspections before producing a final report in 1858. Above and beyond these official paper trails, the sharecroppers' rebellion became widely known mostly thanks to the firsthand account written by its protagonist, a schoolteacher from Fanas named Thomas Davatz who was initially commissioned by Swiss cantonal authorities to gather information about the state of emigrant sharecroppers in São Paulo. As Bruno Witzel de Souza (2022) recently discussed, Davatz's published account may have circulated widely, and its estimated cost put it within the reach of Swiss industrial workers. The account also fed the flames of propagandists who lambasted emigration to Brazil as they favored and had interests vested in other destinations. And perhaps most importantly, Davatz's story was read by governmental figures both in Brazil and in German territories, including in Prussia

[1] There is room for debate about whether the enslaved were involved or allusion to their participation pertained to a strategy by the Vergueiros to obtain armed support from the government. For a view on the former, see Mota (2021); and for the latter Pérez Meléndez (2024, p. 210), as well as Santin Gardenal and Witzel de Souza (2021).

(Heflinger Jr., 2009, p. 66-70, 89; Witzel de Souza, 2022; Pérez Meléndez, 2024, p. 209-212).[2]

Following these evidentiary traces, scholars largely abide by an understanding that the sharecroppers' revolt of 1856-1857 triggered the Heydt Rescript (Fouquet, 1966; Blackbourn, 2023, p. 259-265). And indeed, the text of the circular itself seems to confirm this, as it opened with a reference to the abuses that gave rise to *colono* unrest. "The reports and complaints about the sad and hopeless situation of the German emigrants in Brazil," the decree began, "have recently become more and more numerous and, upon further investigation, have largely proven to be justified. Measures should thus be taken to remedy the situation…" (*Königlich Preußischer Staats-Anzeiger*, 1859, p. 2059-2060). But, however tenable this literal view, two problems remain unsolved: first, that the Rescript remains the object of overly vague historical accounting to date beyond mechanistic explanations that portray it as an episodic reflex reaction on the part of Prussia, if with a two-year delay after the sharecroppers' rebellion. Scholars and essayists in Brazil have long explained away the circular and its motivation with general and often unsubstantiated claims, including one that went as far as arguing that colonization entrepreneur Herman Blumenau was its primary target (Jamundá, 1993).

Secondly, part of the challenge in historicizing the Heydt Rescript hinges on the fact that its initial interpretations from the moment of occurrence appears to have been shaped without direct consultation to the original text of the decree itself. In the thirty-seven years during which the Heydt Rescript remained in full effect, Brazilian newspapers only referred to it succinctly as an emigration ban, while, according to one historian, Brazilian statesmen who cited it in parliamentary debates bemoaned its consequences without having read it—an issue some scholars tried to remedy by reproducing the text in full (Fouquet, 1966; Soares, 1992). Vague understandings have also pervaded the work of historians of German colonialism who understand the Heydt Rescript as heavily impacting Brazil but having little weight in Prussian affairs. Recent

[2] It bears mention that Davatz's account also acquired an outsized importance in the historiography of Brazil both on account of its nature as an extensive firsthand account by a *colono* and of its modern-day translation and curation by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda as part of Editora Itatiaia's "Reconquista do Brasil" series: see Davatz (1980).

global approaches to German history either omit any reference to the Heydt Rescript or allude to it strictly in relation to *colono* abuses (Conrad, 2010; Blackbourn, 2023, p. 259-265). Present understandings of this trend-setting restriction, then, tend to obscure its author, its context, and its possible meanings beyond face value. A more grounded and historically informed understanding of this pivotal decree may thus open the way for more far-reaching studies. After all, lingering questions abound. Why, for instance, did Brazil-oriented migration markets in Hamburg and Bremen suddenly shutter the private emigration agents that served as their engine of growth? How was it that a trade rather than the foreign affairs minister issued a migration-related statute? And, as will be discussed in the following pages, what role did historical processes and Prussian politics play in issuing the Heydt Rescript?

In the spirit of contributing to critical inquiries, this article offers an examination of the Heydt Rescript within and beyond the Brazilian context. I contend that doing so redefines the history around this decree in two significant ways. First, as a major migration restriction, this circular interrogates common understandings of the nineteenth century as an era of receding migration interdictions. As migration historians discuss, emergent passport technologies and "exit revolutions" coupled with new mobility options and liberal values to bolster unprecedented migratory movements across the Atlantic during the 1800s (Moya, 1998, p. 13-44; Torpey, 2000; Zolberg, 2007). In many ways, both Brazil and Prussia reflected these changes, each in their own way. Brazil, for example, had begun instituting passport controls as early as the 1820s. Whereas Prussia experienced centralization of mobility controls somewhat later, it evinced a politically adaptable rather than principled approach to migration controls and surveillance up to mid-century (Torpey, 2000, p. 63-66; Schubert, 2021; Farias, 2022).[3] At the tail end of these developments and still preceding the era of mass migrations (c.1870-1920) and the "age of migration restriction" (c.1920s-1940s) (Cook-Martín and FitzGerald,

[3] In Prussia, an 1817 law liberalized entries but required provincial or higher authorities to authorize exit passports. Harsh penalties arose three years later when a new regulation threatened prison time to anyone inducing Prussians to emigrate. By the early 1830s, Prussia devised special transit permits for Polish rebels in lieu of residence permits and continued to carry out expulsions of unhoused persons in an increasingly centralized mechanism formalized across German Confederation through the Gotha Convention of 1851, which enticed the poor to emigrate.

2014), the Heydt Rescript exemplifies an early, muscular restrictionism, one uncharacteristically adopted by a "sending" rather than "receiving" state, and enacted in the service of myriad concerns.

The Heydt Rescript, I argue, was a restrictive decree that responded to several Prussian political and geopolitical imperatives, crystallizing policy concerns beyond the suffering of Prussian migrants in Brazilian lands. As such, the circular epitomized Prussian shrewdness by responding to numerous needs much closer to home at a time in which the Prussian state found itself in the throes of a transition to a new regime and on the verge of an era of large-scale regional conflagrations already set afoot by the Crimean war (1854-1856) (Bright and Geyer, 1996). In this context, the Heydt Rescript emerges as a quite versatile and multi-modal policy expedient. It preemptively set the stage for a much needed a military reform that would require higher conscription levels. It forced Brazil to reconsider past failures in its negotiations for a treaty with the Zollverein headed by Prussia. It interdicted private emigration agencies and in doing so sent a strong signal that sought to bring von der Heydt's liberal foes to heel. And it served as a sanitary prophylactic against reported bouts of cholera and other fevers across the Atlantic, most immediately in Brazilian ports. Hence, the Heydt Rescript actively addressed concerns about overseas epidemics, bilateral commercial accords, internal politics and military demands at a time of heightened regional tensions in Europe and across the globe. Notably, it also foreshadowed a bold Prussian statism that exploited exit requirements as a means to extend the reach of its migration policies beyond its own territorial confines, thus internalizing what Aristide Zolberg (2007) referred to as "remote control," that is, the ability of modern states to stem migrations at points of departure beyond their own borders.

Seeing the Heydt Rescript under new light invites to think with but also beyond the most obvious cause-and-effect explanation as the most adequate one, namely that a "revolt" by Swiss sharecroppers in one plantation elicited such a strong policy response from Prussia. Expanding the context of the decree also calls into question the normative power attributed to law as a structuring principle of social and political processes by showing instead that legal statutes such as the Rescript were conjunctural products of a long list of inter-state and intra-state dynamics. In this

vein, the following pages bring the Heydt Rescript into historical relief by briefly profiling its author and then contextualizing the decree in a continuum of four overlapping processes: the peddling of German overseas expansionism in 1848 even after the failure of Brazilian efforts to secure an accord with the Zollverein; the articulation of restrictive attitudes toward emigration on the coattails of the 1848 revolutions; the internal economic pressures generated by the 1857 financial crisis; and Prussian military needs congealing in 1859 and reaching a peak only with German unification in 1871.

1. Who's Afraid of von der Heydt? Biographical Portrait of a Bourgeois Monarchist

Although August von der Heydt has but a spectral presence in the study of migrations to Brazil, he was in fact of flesh and blood. Born in 1801, August grew up the eldest of three sons in a wealthy banking family from Elberfeld, just east of Dusseldorf. Barely fourteen at the end of the Napoleonic wars and the establishment of the German Confederation, young August began apprenticing in London and Le Havre before joining his father's bank, Heydt, Kerstens & Sons (*Heydt, Kerstens und Söhne*), in 1824. Back in Elberfeld, he rapidly rose through public-service ranks. Starting in 1831, he served as commercial-court judge in Elberfeld and other surrounding districts and a year later joined the recently founded Chamber of Commerce of Elberfeld and Barmen.

Meanwhile, he started to make a name for himself as an ambitious businessman humble enough to learn from past errors and sufficiently savvy to redirect his efforts to more munificent opportunities. He became board member and accountant of the German-American Mining Company (*Deutsch-amerikanischer Bergwerks-Verein*, est. 1824), which dashed into markets among an early cohort of about sixteen Prussian *Aktiengesellenshaften* (joint-stock companies) founded up to 1825 in the mold of the pioneering Rhenish-West Indian Company of 1821 (Bergengrün, 1908, p. 26-27; Fohlin, 2005). The German-American Mining Company banked its high hopes on silver and gold for minting. Indeed, as the enterprise leased properties from the British-owned United Mexican Mining Association in El Chico (*Mineral del Chico*), in the present-day Mexican

state of Hidalgo, von der Heydt gifted the young Prussian prince, future Friedrich Wilhelm III, with a commemorative coin that read "the first fruits of our mining in Mexico" (United Mexican Mining Association, 1830; Bergengrün, 1908, p. 26). But the gift soon became ill-timed memorabilia. With the catastrophic loss of two million thalers, the German-American Mining Company folded in the early 1830s, leaving von der Heydt free to pursue more secure endeavors closer to home, for which he turned his attention to rail construction.

As Heydt, Kersten & Sons began issuing railway securities, von der Heydt got directly involved in a number of rail companies, working as a key, and quite successful, mediator in local subscriber drives, as much as conversations with government ministers in Berlin. By 1836 he secured a royal permit to proceed with plans for a major line connecting Dusseldorf and Witten via Elberfeld. Concurrently, he floated proposals to wrest the monopoly from a Dutch steam packet company over navigation on the Rhine, succeeding in capitalizing a company that later launched and was ultimately presided over by von der Heydt's brother in 1850. Surely, the road to obtaining such concessions and ensuring they were adequately capitalized necessitated continuous jockeying, negotiations, and wealth. Few men were as adept or well-endowed for the tasks as von der Heydt. By 1843, he himself went on to chair the board of a major rail company that resulted from the merger of some of the lines he had organized in the previous decade and had come together gradually into an aspirational infrastructural network intended to transport and market the coal produced in the Ruhr valley (Bergengrün, 1908, p. 26, 40-56; Reden, 1844, p. 835-839, 893; Köllmann, 1972, p. 74-76).

Von der Heydt's business exploits ran parallel to his rapid ascent from local government to political office. As a contemporary journal would later describe von der Heydt, "raised as a banker and employed for years, he became a bureaucrat almost from the very first moment of his official duties" (Steger, 1859, p. 353). He succeeded his father in the Elberfeld municipal council in 1833 and became district council member a year later, proving his mettle as an efficient administrator and earning public trust through a spirited advocacy for a local school. As a town notable, he not only gained greater regional notoriety, but also got the chance to participate in formal events welcoming the Prussian royals to

Elberfeld. By 1839, he was elected to represent his hometown in the Rhenish provincial parliament, where he remained through successive elections until 1848, when he was elected to the Prussian National Assembly (Bergengrün, 1908, p. 36-40). By year's end, however, he received and accepted an offer from Friedrich Wilhelm Graf von Brandenburg (the illegitimate half-brother of the Prussian king) to take the Trade, Industry and Public Works portfolio in his cabinet.

Politically speaking, von der Heydt cut a rare figure in Prussian politics. Although a seasoned businessman and financier, he did not subscribe to the free-trade movement or the more adamant liberal tenets of the time once his career got on the move. As a native of the North Rhine-Westphalia region that only came under Prussia's oversight during his childhood, he nonetheless espoused a profound fealty for the Prussian Crown. His biographers have underlined how he incited reservations from more traditional conservatives who took issue with his defense of parliamentary rights as much as the rage of liberals who felt betrayed by his monarchism. Puzzlingly, the literature refers to him as a liberal-conservative. A more helpful and recent study identifies him as a "moderate, statist conservative." In fact, von der Heydt began his political career as a liberal, but quickly swayed to more conservative views after 1848, although he maintained a strong bureaucratic and statist streak that defied corporatist and anti-industrial conservatives such as those grouped around the weekly *Berliner Politisches Wochenblatt* or the *Neue Preußische Zeitung*. In the end, as historian John Breuilly (1996, p. 17) remarked, von der Heydt represented the bourgeois liberals who remained "loyal servants of their monarch" (see also Steger, 1859, p. 353-356; Beck, 1993; Barclay, 1995, p. 171-174; Weaver, 2024, p. 140).

In some regards, then, von der Heydt's closest analog in the Brazilian context would be Irineu Evangelista de Sousa, barão de Mauá, a liberal banker also trained in London who believed in protectionism for his enterprises but was predisposed to transact with conservatives when they were in power. Mauá the entrepreneur also turned away from the business of migration when his Amazon Navigation Company purposely rid itself of the onus of migrant settlement activities to exclusively dedicate itself to transport and commercial freight (Sousa, 1857; Merchant, 1965; Caldeira, 1995). At the same time, von der Heydt's political temperament

evoked that of another Brazilian contemporary, the marquês de Paraná of the conciliation period, who tried to balance infrastructural improvement imperatives with a balanced style of governance that sidestepped partisan animosities (Estefanes, 2013). Like Paraná, von der Heydt saw the monarchy not as a client nor as a source of subsidies necessary for private endeavors, but as a beacon of state-led development that could, with adequate budget rules, lay down the rails of progress on its own initiative, an ideal von der Heydt had already enacted as the architect of state-controlled railways (Brophy, 1998). It was a similarly calculated reasoning that would guide von der Heydt in considering the matters relative to emigration and to Brazil that would eventually lead him to issue his 1859 circular. Yet, to illuminate that incidence it is necessary to situate von der Heydt's political trajectory in a broader context.

2. To the 1848 Frankfurt Parliament: From the *Vormärz* to the *Vereine*

Prussia and the Brazilian Empire remained mutual strangers for most of the early nineteenth century. However, after Brazilian independence in 1822, the commerce between Brazilian ports and Hamburg, one of the main outlays for Prussian goods, began to pick up, especially after the Hanseatic cities' trade agreement with Brazil in 1827. On that same year, the establishment of the Bremerhaven harbor, downriver from Bremen on the Weser, further bolstered commerce between Brazil and the German Confederacy through what would soon become a major emigration port. Merchants, especially those based in Hamburg and involved in its senate, thus played a major intermediary role in launching German-Brazilian commercial exchange as much as directed migration activities that included Brazil among other destinations in the Americas (Turk, 1989; Hoerder, 1993; Weber, 2008; Naranch, 2011).

In addition, the gradual consolidation of the Prussian-led Zollverein customs union in the 1830s called the attention of Brazilian diplomats, to the point that, when the Anglo-Brazilian preferential accords expired in the early 1840s, Prussia emerged as the next best candidate to become the Brazilian empire's commercial partner. Thus, in 1844 Brazil's first plenipotentiary to Prussia arrived in the dead of Berlin's winter to try to

negotiate a preferential treaty with the Zollverein. The Brazilian envoy, Miguel Calmon du Pin e Almeida, had a long government service record as much as extensive experience in private business endeavors that included his foray into the business of directed migrations (Pérez Meléndez, 2024, p. 120-151). As such, when the Prussian foreign minister complained that Brazil had never reached out despite knowing that Prussia lacked its own colonies and therefore much coveted tropical commodities, Calmon understood how to utilize a then resurgent German emigration wave to his favor. Emigration came to play a dual role in these negotiations, as both a stick and a carrot used respectively by Prussia and Brazil to compel each other to favorable terms.

Ultimately, Calmon's diplomatic mission to Berlin proved unsuccessful, if only relatively so. Despite falling short of a formal treaty, Calmon issued a pamphlet to stoke migrations to Brazil that fed directly into the growing expansionist chorus of the *Vormärz*, a period of liberal effervescence that preceded the 1848 revolutions and that featured notorious emigration expansionists like Johann Jakob Sturz, who also happened to serve as Brazil's consul in Berlin. At the same time, Calmon's tract fed into Prussian protectionists' expectations that a strong regulatory state should oversee migratory processes. By playing both fields, Calmon signaled that Brazil was open for emigration business and quickly joined a group of Hamburg merchants in trying to launch a new colonization enterprise (Silva Ferreira, 2020; Pérez Meléndez, 2024, p. 81-119). In short then, Calmon's tract and the simultaneous founding of an emigration association focused on sending emigrants to Brazil added momentum to liberal drives to instrumentalize migrations as tools for a German expansionism, drives that reached a high point with the 1848 revolutions (Almeida, 1846; Walker, 1964; Fitzpatrick, 2008).[4]

A medley of associations across German lands had already robustly peddled emigration as a desirable pursuit to peasants and artisans alike. From 1833 to 1846, at least six such organizations assembled in Giessen, Dusseldorf, Mainz, Berlin and Leipzig with the aim of promoting Texas, Guatemala or Nicaragua as main destinations. Yet the 1848 revolutions

[4] For background on the pre-revolutionary period of the *Vormärz* (the "pre-March" 1848 period) and the events during and after 1848, see Barclay (2004). For a classic general account of 1848, Sperber (1994).

ushered in a surge of variously named emigration associations. On that year alone, eight new associations appeared, including in cities such as Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Stuttgart, and even in Breslau (in present-day Poland). Another seven emigration societies followed in 1849 and six more in 1850. However, the profile and function of each association (*Verein*) differed (Marschalck, 1973, p. 21-22; Bickelmann, 1991). Some associations took their name from their primary emigrant catchment grounds – the Silesian mountains or the Kingdom of Saxony, for instance – as a way of signaling their dedication to promote exits from there specifically. Others were christened depending on their target destinations, which included Australia, Central America more broadly, and Chile from 1848 on. Also, new associations, especially those that sprang from 1850 on, increasingly evinced two new tendencies: they aggregated local or regional emigration societies, and they did so by claiming to serve as a purportedly "national" German crucible for them. In all, the growing number of associations represented an unexpected coalition of conservative and liberal businessmen, scholars and government figures.

By bringing together the 1848 revolutionary spirit and the cause of German unification, the Frankfurt Parliament also became the standard-bearer for German overseas expansionism (Fitzpatrick, 2008). On 16 Oct. 1848, regional emigration associations came together in Frankfurt and laid the groundwork for founding the Berlin-based *Verein zur Zentralisation deutscher Auswanderung und Kolonisation* (Society for Centralization of German Emigration and Colonization) in 1849, which later became the *Zentral-Verein für deutsche Auswanderungs-und Kolonisations-Angelegenheiten* (Central Association for German Emigration and Colonization Matters) (CM, 1853; Bickelmann, 1991). In the interim, responding to the liberal upsurge within his kingdom, in December the Prussian king dissolved the Berlin constitutional assembly then in session and appointed August von der Heydt minister of trade, as newspapers in Brazil took care to report (CM, 1849). This was doubtless a time of crisis. And, by the same token, this was also a time of opportunity. Contrary to the Vergueiros' preferences and their attempts to monopolize *colono* recruitment and distribution services beyond São Paulo, a parallel migration boosterism unfolded in Brazil starting in 1848 targeting precisely and explicitly the subjects fleeing political unrest in Europe. Bahian deputy

Francisco Gonçalves Martins, for example, referred to the "disorder threatening all of Europe" as a way to call Brazilian authorities' attention to the opportune timing of his own proposal to import European *colonos* (Martins, 1848; Pérez Meléndez, 2024, p. 172-173). In an ironic twist, the shuttering of the Frankfurt assembly and liberals' ensuing disbandment generated a wave of exiles composed of the very same champions of emigration schemes, some of whom, like Herman Blumenau, soon joined Brazilian entrepreneurs and politicians trying, like them, to take advantage of migrations from Europe (Tóth, 2014).

Discussions around emigration survived the reaction to the 1848 revolutions. The *Zentral-Verein* carried on with its meetings, if with diminishing intensity, throughout the early years of the following decade. Concurrently, Brazilian entrepreneurs began to cash in on directed migrations as epitomized by the family business of Nicolau Vergueiro, whose colonization pursuits fed coffee planters' wishful thinking that *parceria*, a kind of sharecropping agreement, would herald a new labor system alternative to slavery. The years ahead, however, demonstrated the misplaced hopes on *parceria*, as the migrant *colonos* who partook in it began to flag egregious abuses. Such allegations not only led to the Ibicaba's sharecroppers' revolt of 1856, which many scholars take as the origin point of the Heydt Rescript, but more importantly signaled the interpenetration of migration-related dynamics in Brazil and a rising tide of global conflicts.

3. The Troubled 1850s and the War of Words

The 1850s brought signs of trouble. From its outset, the decade marked the start of halfhearted settlements, tardy reforms, and faulty preemption strategies. In Prussia, a scathing defeat in the Schleswig-Holstein war against Denmark (1848-1850) coincided with the royal imposition of a moderate constitution in 1849-1850 that bolstered state bureaucratization under prime minister Otto von Manteuffel, a conservative educated at the University of Halle who kept von der Heydt in the Trade portfolio he had taken up in 1848. In addition, the Zollverein continued to expand with the accession of Hanover and Oldenburg in 1851 and 1852 (Blackbourn, 1998, p. 225-242). Meanwhile in Brazil,

legislative debates revived both the question of the illegal slave trade and the need for codified land regulations to benefit colonization/emigration companies such as the one set up in Hamburg in 1849. As a result, 1850 saw the approval of a definitive slave trade ban as well as the Brazilian Empire's first land law (Bethell, 1970; Silva, 1996).

Other late-coming and gradualist reformisms sprang elsewhere. In the US, the compromise of 1850 attempted to forestall a sectional conflict between north and south, for instance. In the Ottoman Empire the ongoing *Tanzimat* reforms reached an inflection point in 1856, when a new edict opened the door to new rights for non-Muslim confessional communities that foreign powers quickly instrumentalized in self-serving proxy wars. In other contexts, evidence of trouble ahead was closer to the surface, as when the coup of 1851 in France paved the way for the ascension of Napoléon III. These profound if often scaffolded political shifts gave way to a period of protracted, large-scale regional conflicts that began with two notorious conflagrations (Bright; Geyer, 1996). In China, millenarian religious rebels informed by Christian teachings rose in the south against the Qing emperor in 1850, launching an all-out war in the name of their newly christened "Heavenly Kingdom." The Taiping rebellion, as this massive civil war of attrition became known, lasted until these rebels' demise in 1864 (Platt, 2012; Meyer-Fong, 2013). Secondly, the Crimean War put a damper on Russian bluster and crowned Ottomans with a victory that nonetheless obligated them to make major concessions, as exemplified in that edict of 1856, to the British and French. In many ways, then, these years of compromise and conflict portended even more tumultuous times ahead.

Brazil joined these gathering clouds by leading a regional campaign against the Argentinian caudillo Juan Manuel de Rosas in 1851-1852. To do so, it sent its own emissary, Pernambucan politician Sebastião do Rego Barros to conscribe decommissioned Prussian soldiers from the Schleswig-Holstein War. The Brazilian press praised Rego Barros's efforts and surmised that any Prussian obstacle to his recruitment campaign would cede to the "good fortune" that this enlistment represented for these otherwise idle fighters (DRJ, 1851; Piassini, 2021). Once in Brazil, however, these conscripts' performance countered the high expectations placed upon them. As the Platine war unfolded, these recruits both suffered from and

partook in the collapse of the chain of command and poor logistics on the Brazilian side. The travails of the *Brummers*, as these repurposed Prussian veterans were called, came to the attention of the *Zentral-Verein* in Berlin in 1852. Interestingly, it was precisely because of this exchange of information on the fate of Prussian emigrants that some Prussian veterans themselves transited from the war field to a war of words and a war for German emigrants between Brazil and other potential destinations.

Samuel Gottfried Kerst emerged as one of the leading saboteurs of emigration to Brazil during these years. A Prussian mercenary who served Brazilian Emperor Pedro I in the Cisplatina War (1826-1828), Kerst had a checkered political past in Brazil. After his service, he participated in a republican conspiracy in Porto Alegre in 1830 and was later imprisoned for protesting Pedro I's abdication. Twenty years later, he found himself in the employ of the Prussian Navy and in the heat of debate at the *Zentral-Verein*, in whose discussions he energetically peddled Uruguay as a fertile horizon for a German expansion free from US and British influence while badmouthing Brazilian colonization recruitment as an effort to replace enslaved Africans (Kerst, 1851; 1853; Fitzpatrick, 2008, p. 137-139). These discussions left a broader political imprint beyond the discursive by aggregating a robust series of grievances against the treatment of German migrants to Brazil on the floor of the *Zentral-Verein*, whose membership included Hamburg merchants such as Robert Sloman, owner of some leading steam lines to the Americas, and at least three Prussian ministers, including August von der Heydt himself (JC, 1853). For this distinguished audience a character like Kerst personified the disillusionment of many German subjects who had at some point served or worked in Brazil and who by the 1850s warned others contemplating emigration to Brazilian lands. Consular employees and appointees in Hamburg, Berlin and other important urban centers in the German Confederacy tried as they could to counter such propaganda while Brazilian periodicals preempted domestic critics by publishing testimonials that portrayed *colono* experiences in positive light. However, the sharecroppers' revolt of 24 Dec. 1856 which arose on account of the fraudulent and abusive practices suffered by *colonos* working for the Vergueiro house, called into question these edulcorated portrayals. As Swiss authorities published the findings of their inquest into the Vergueiros in 1858, Bra-

zilian authorities resorted to a more aggressive publicity strategy by hiring Joseph Hörmeyer as an emigration propagandist. Austrian-born Hörmeyer was the perfect hack. Having served Brazil as a Brummer in the war against Rosas, in his new position he published an emigrant handbook and launched an emigration-focused journal that remained in circulation until 1861 (Hörmeyer, 1857; 1858; 1859).[5]

At the same time as this war of words entered its high point, however, exogenous well beyond opinion pieces began to weigh on and therefore shape the profile of migratory movements to Brazil. The panic of 1857 unleashed a financial crisis across most Atlantic economies. Ongoing colonization enterprises generously bankrolled or supported by the Brazilian government began to feel the effects of a tightening budgets and liquidity constraints. On top of those challenges, the reports on the occurrences at Ibicaba commissioned by the Swiss Confederacy finally came to light, which lent consistency to otherwise anecdotal claims of abuse against German-speaking *colonos* in Brazil. Meanwhile, the panic of 1857 also led to commercial houses in Hamburg failing or at the very least shoring up their operations under duress, as occurred also with the prominent banking house of Mauá in Brazil and other firms sucked into and then directly contributing to the financial crisis. As historian Carlos Gabriel Guimarães reminds us, even Karl Marx noted the impact of Brazilian coffee firms' overdue payments to Hamburg houses (Villela, 2020, p. 25-46; Calomiris and Schweikart, 1991; Huston, 1999; Guimarães, 2012, p. 188-194).

In the midst of these clipped changes, Prussia seemed at first to do well. The kingdom recovered quickly from the economic impact of the panic, but other concerns of far greater weight arose at a speed that matched its recovery. In 1859, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia obtained a defense pledge from Napoléon III, after which Austria descended upon the former in defense of Habsburg-controlled Lombardy and Venetia. Austria fell in the battles of Magenta and Solferino between 10 and 24 June 1859, which not only marked the victory of the Franco-Sardinian alliance, but also bolstered Napoléon III's extraterritorial ambi-

[5] IHGB, Coleção Olinda, Lata 208, doc. 58, Josef Hörmeyer to the marquês de Olinda (1 Jan. 1859); Arquivo Nacional do Brasil, Série Agricultura, IA[6] 8, Manoel Felizardo to Joseph Hörmeyer (23 Oct. 1861).

tions, including those targeting the Rhine which placed Prussia in their crosshairs.

4. Competing Concerns? Colonization Abuses vs. Military Mobilization

Belligerence hung in the air in the German Confederacy, and more so Prussia, in 1859. As the Armistice of Villafranca signed in July ceded Austrian Lombardy to France and fed Napoléon III's expansionist tendencies, Prussian ministers contemplated a looming threat while acknowledging that their military forces remained ill-prepared for any French movement on the Rhine. From within, a newly created civil association, the *Deutscher Nationalverein* (German National Association), vociferously raised alarms over the imminence of war and advocated for arming gymnast societies if not the wider populace in preparation for that event. The liberal-conservative Prussian cabinet, however, saw this kind of calling as a threat to the centralized, bureaucratic statism so meticulously nursed by the Manteuffel cabinet (Dec. 1850-Nov. 1858) for the good part of the decade (Müller, 2007). Of course, there was also the issue of the "New Era": with the Prussian king in his deathbed, his brother Wilhelm became Prince Regent in October 1858 and opened the way for a new, liberal-conservative cabinet headed by a German prince, Karl Anton von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, which kept von der Heydt as Trade minister as the one hold-over from the preceding conservative era (Barclay, 1995, p. 280-281). Nevertheless, in his continuing ministerial role von der Heydt had now to temper his liberal-leaning support for parliamentary rights and prerogatives with the more conservative, pro-monarchical expectations of the Prince Regent himself and conservative ministers like Albrecth von Roon, who held the War portfolio.

During this time, certainly, reports about and reasons for concern over abuses in Brazil did not relent, but quite the contrary. Brazilian consul Sturz resigned from his post in Berlin, after enduring a long-running neglect and even mistreatment on the part of higher authorities in Brazil's Foreign ministry for years. The loss for Brazilian statesmen and colonization entrepreneurs was incalculable, as Sturz had long served both as a leading defender of Brazil's record and as a savvy emigration pro-

moter that provided Brazilian counterparts with a vast trove of new ideas and readings on directed migrations and settlement in the hopes of systematizing colonization pursuits. Although Sturz had publicly confronted Kerst and others in Brazil's defense, once he relieved himself of his position, he left for the US and began publishing tracts that caustically upbraided Brazilian imperial officials and businessmen for their abuses against *colonos*.

In addition, in the late months of 1859, Sturz was taken to court by the old president of the *Zentral-Verein* for calumny and defamation. Although the *Zentral-Verein* had ceased operations in 1855, Sturz had published a couple of newspaper articles critical of it in May and June of 1859. The *Zentral-Verein*'s old president, Ernst Gäbler, who by then worked under the Prussian admiralty, took issue with Sturz's claims that he had terminated the association's operations without issuing a report on its finances and Sturz's suggestion that some individuals, which Gäbler took to mean him, had benefited from negotiations for privileges with the Brazilian government in exchange for their role in stoking migrations to Brazil. In his defense, Gäbler acknowledged having conferred with the Brazilian minister in Hamburg and obtaining a distinction from the Brazilian minister but purely as an appreciation on the part of Brazil for attending to some inquiries about the Prussian navy. Sturz then conceded, in his defense, that he was referring to the Brazilian minister in Hamburg and not to Gäbler when he mentioned illicit gains and unseemly favors obtained from organizing emigration drives (CM, 1860; Sturz, 1862). Because the case was seen by criminal courts in Berlin on 15 Nov. 1859, that is, twelve days after the Heydt Rescript was issued, it stands to reason that it may have come to the attention of minister von der Heydt, whose decree could then be taken as a way of taking Sturz's accusations seriously and considering Hamburg emigration networks as essentially corrupted by profiteering, or as a way of responding to Sturz's and other Brazilian officials' activities in Hamburg itself.

At any rate, notwithstanding such ongoing reminders of abuse allegations and accusations of self-dealing, by 1859 Prussian statesmen were comparatively less interested in Brazil than they had been a decade earlier. Brazil had lost its allure not only because of the perceived relative advantages for emigrants offered by some of its neighbors, but because

entirely new horizons in Asia had opened up for the expansion of Prussian interests. With the Chinese Celestial Empire still ensconced in an uphill battle against the Heavenly Kingdom rebels, British and French troops brought the Qing to heel during the Second Opium War (1856-1860), particularly with their successful taking of Canton in 1858 and following up with the devastating British march into Beijing two years later. The conflict plied the Qing to foreign demands for commercial treaties and foisted Chinese markets to the attention of Prussian men of trade. In addition, the Austrian overseas expedition of the *Novara* headed by prince Maximilian (1857-1859) and the initiative of Hamburg merchants interested in Chinese commercial overtures convinced von der Heydt himself of the importance of pursuing such opportunities. In consequence, von der Heydt advocated for an expedition before the Prince Regent, who granted approval for it in order to allow Prussia a foothold into Asian markets in August 1859 (Naranch, 2010; Becker, 2021, p. 35-42).

Within months, the expedition left from Stettin toward China, where, after aggressive wrangling in the aftermath of the siege of Beijing, Prussian envoys secure a Sino-German treaty in 1861 that conferred benefits similar to those conceded to France and Great Britain, and recognized Prussia as legitimate representative for the Zollverein, the Hanse cities, and the Grand Duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz (Becker, 2021). Moreover, the Chinese empire's diminished influence in southeast Asia due to its ongoing conflicts also provided an opening for Prussia to consider satellite polities ripe for an approach.[6] The French intervention of 1861 in the Kingdom of Vietnam further allowed Prussia to obtain a commercial treaty from the Vietnamese emperor before moving on to also secure a treaty with the Kingdom of Siam in early 1862. In short, then, during the course of the ideation and frenzied execution of this treaty-seeking expedition, Brazil ceased to be a coveted target of German imperial expansionism.

Von der Heydt issued his rescript on 3 Nov. 1859, long after the events at Ibicaba and a year following the publication of the findings by

[6] I am here advancing this point in the wake of similar arguments made by Bayly (1989) for British incursions into domains under the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman empires during profound political crises. For the case of Chinese-Prussian relations, the interpretive analogy I propose would require more specialized research. See Bayly (1989).

the Swiss inquest. Invectives against Brazil as an emigration destination raged on, as did the Brazilian government's international effort to publicize itself as a migrant destination, with a particular focus on São Paulo from the 1870s on (Witzel de Souza, 2023). Moreover, in addition to negative propaganda, von der Heydt may have been increasingly worried about the epidemic surge that had recently and notoriously besieged Brazilian ports, particularly the rising cases of cholera after 1856, which had contributed to a kind of rebranding of Brazil as a dangerously pestilent land, as historian Ian Read has discussed (Cooper, 1986; Read, 2022). Yet, Brazil-related worries may have also been eclipsed by geopolitical concerns in the Prussian homeland and new commercial opportunities overseas. These concerns and opportunities may have called von der Heydt to greater circumspection toward emigration than he may have exhibited as a supporter of the *Zentral-Verein* in the late 1840s and early 50s, as well as to a more interventionist approach to force Hamburg and Bremen shipping magnates to consider commercial expansions besides or beyond Brazil. In addition, the question of military preparedness lingered on, with the Hohenzollern cabinet insisting it should remain under the purview of centralized state attributions and specifically under the authority of the monarch himself. Plans for a military organization unfolded from 1858 to 1859, powered along, according to Dierk Walter, by a legion of desk officers and then by the new war minister Albrecht von Roon and Prince Regent Wilhelm, who aimed to override the old Service Law of 1814 in order to ease recruitment and rein in the *Landwehr*, an elite and largely useless national-guard-like militia established in 1815. However, these plans became embroiled in struggles with the liberal-dominated lower house of the Prussian parliament over the extent of the monarch's authority to control the military budget. Von der Heydt had already faced, and lost, similar struggles with liberals in the lower house over the financing of state-developed railways, but he also believed in constitutional principles that would ultimately see him quit his ministry as the conflict over who controlled military expenditures reached its peak in 1862 (after this, von der Heydt took up the Trade portfolio once more, though briefly, in 1866-1867) (Bergengrün, 1908, p. 190-191; Grenville, 1976, p. 164-168; Walter, 2009).

Although previous squabbles with liberal lawmakers had already

disabused him of any positive expectations in the negotiations over the recruitment reforms, von der Heydt aided the ongoing military overhaul with his rescript. By forbidding direct financial support and propaganda for emigration to Brazil, von der Heydt in fact contributed to cutting the exit of potential conscripts at a time of great military need. Two additional details support an understanding that by curtailing emigration von der Heydt may have helped prepare the way for the military reform to make possible effective troop build-up once it was completed. First, the abolition of the special militia known as the *Landwehr*, which according to historian Dierk Walter was already a perfunctory military institution, demoted the elites who previously enjoyed the privilege of reduced training times and service in higher posts than regular army conscripts. Under the projected military reform, these elites were expected to serve and be promoted according to new, more uniformly applied rules, which may have hastened their desire to avoid conscription and opt to migrate instead, as occurred in other European countries at the time. Secondly, assuming that intercontinental travel fares maintained the price trends studied by Raymond Cohn and Simone Wegge (2017) for the period from 1846-1857, then it stands to reason, according to these scholars' conclusions, that most German emigrants at the time had to possess at the very least a lower middle-class income to be able to afford even steerage. Blocking emigration to Brazil, whose fare was 50 to a 100% greater than the fare from Hamburg to New York, signified holding back a middle-class and at times elite sector of the population possessing a presumed class-bound discipline which would engross the files of the military (Cohn; Wegge, 2017).

Significantly, however, whether or not bolstering conscription was von der Heydt's primary objective, his Rescript represented a policy incursion beyond the bounds of the Trade portfolio. Technically, a government decision of the kind that so weighed on international relations technically pertained to Foreign Affairs. However, several factors hint at ulterior motives in the form of commercial designs that may serve to further explain why or how other interests besides curtailing abuses against German sharecroppers lay at the heart of the Heydt Rescript. The decree directly and unequivocally targeted specific steamship magnates and brokers from Hamburg and Bremen who had obtained special dispensations

to partake in the business of emigration by function of the Prussian law on emigration transports of 7 May 1853 approved by the Manteuffel cabinet (including von der Heydt), which had green-lighted private carriers and agents to pursue the business of recruiting and transporting migrants across the Atlantic under specific rules of conduct (Rendschmidt, 1855, p. 233-234).

Six years after opening the floodgates of the business of migration, the Heydt Rescript of 1859 categorically shuttered prominent private agents' and firms' activities but only exclusively as those pertaining to Brazil. And, rather than in blanket fashion, it did so by name, specifically calling out nine individuals with firms in Hamburg (Robert Miles Sloman; Louis Knorr and Carl Adolph Holtermann; Theodor August Behn Jr. and Valentin Lorenz-Meyer) and Bremen (Carl Pokranz and a Lebrecht Hoffmann; August Bolten and H.W. Böhme). More research into these individuals and firms, and their operations to that date (which long preceded the emergence of the Hamburg-South America Line in 1871) could help ascertain why they were targeted by von der Heydt and to what end. For now, it suffices to note that some of these businessmen were well known to von der Heydt. Robert Sloman, for instance, sat as a member of the *Zentral-Verein* together with him. In addition, it serves to underline a strange discrepancy, namely that these entrepreneurs ran businesses in and navigation lines to places other than Brazil. Notoriously, Sloman possessed a near-monopoly of the passage from Hamburg to New York. *Knorr & Holtermann*, in turn, had broken off from Sloman's emporium to run a new Quebec line by the 1850s (Wagner, 2006, p. 42; Hessel, 2020, p. 79). And perhaps most surprisingly, Gustav Heinrich Behn was the brother of Theodor August Behn, who together with the Valentin Lorenz-Meyer mentioned in the Rescript had launched the firm *Behn, Meyer & Co*. in 1840 in Singapore, which by 1857 had a London branch with Hamburg connections that helped it run an already successful import-export business of European manufactures and Malayan products (Yacob, 2018).

Hypothetically, then, by shuttering Prussian expansion into Brazilian markets, the Heydt Rescript may have helped to consolidate the already immensely profitable flows of emigrants and goods between Hamburg/Bremen and New York, and also strengthening Asia-oriented linkages in

accordance with the opportunities projected by the Prussian expedition to China and Mainland Southeast Asia launched but a month before von der Heydt issued his Rescript. The decree, then, may have had multiple economic motivations that transcended concern with *colono* abuses, including forcing some of the steam liners involved not only to redirect their attention to other markets in Asia, but also to abide by greater central state controls. Because von der Heydt had been unable to accomplish the same for railroads after the budgetary confrontations of 1859, this was his chance to bring liberal free traders to heel if not under state control at least under a strong, statist brand of regulatory oversight.

And, yet, for all these possibilities, it would be important to also highlight von der Heydt's dwindling ministerial powers during the New Era (1858-1862) and especially following the accession of Wilhelm I. In 1860, von der Heydt initiated the construction of a sumptuous villa along the southern edge of Berlin's *Tiergarten* and retired there when he resigned from the ministry in 1862 after disagreements with the new primer, Otto von Bismarck. He did have another quite brief stint as Trade minister in 1866 before retiring again to his villa until his passing in 1874. By then, the state centralization he long advocated for had contributed not only to successive Prussian military victories, but ultimately to the emergence of a unified and indeed bullish German state that upheld his decree for close to three more decades.

5. Conclusion

In 1863, Prussia once again took up the Schleswig-Holstein issue and went to war with Denmark, except this time, in contrast to 1851, it emerged victorious, much to the appeasement of Prussian liberal nationalists who had been rallying for such an outcome (Müller, 2007). Then, in 1866, Prussia went on to defeat Austria in war and repeated the feat against France in 1870-1871. Even as these Prussian military achievements accrued, the German Confederation abrogated the requisite of documents authorizing travel in 1867, which hinted that perhaps emigration no longer threatened conscription in the eyes of leading statesmen (Torpey, 2000, p. 58). And yet the Heydt Rescript remained in full force. Twenty-five years after its issue, in fact, a new civil organization in Brazil, the

Sociedade Central de Imigração, made it a point to periodically refer to von der Heydt's decree as one of the "gravest facts exerting a pernicious influence on German emigration to Brazil, which would be so convenient and has already rendered such beautiful results in various regions of the country" (JC, 1884). Despite a recent consular convention between Germany and Brazil, the Heydt Rescript remained in force until 1896, when it was lifted exclusively for the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul in the recently founded Brazilian republic, and finally abolished altogether in 1898 (República, 1896).

A broad contextual survey of the years that preceded the Heydt Rescript and the moment itself in which it came to light reveals that this decree couched itself in a longer chronology of entangled processes that, while not entirely canceling received scholarly interpretations, interrogate and correct them in ways that can open new and generative pathways of historical inquiry. The decree, for instance, initially applied to Prussian emigrants rather than to any German-speaking colono irrespective of their country of provenance, and only after 1871 did it also encompass all German nationals. In addition, the decree was not the first of its kind, as two smaller German polities, Baden and Wurttemberg, had adopted a similar restriction before Prussia (Piazza, 1975, p. 115). Furthermore, the decree singled out top shipping firms in Hamburg, one of the epicenters of the free trade movement, which suggests further avenues of analysis regarding von der Heydt's potential antagonisms with these magnates and other Hamburg merchants, and/or his larger vision for instrumentalizing emigration regulations toward state-led economic and commercial ends. And finally, it is worth noting that the Heydt Rescript did not entirely stem migrations from German lands, which carried on in lesser numbers even after German unification extended the decree's application across territories to which it had not applied upon its original issue.

Ultimately, August von der Heydt's circular gestured toward illiberal and politically motivated migration policies that fed into state-making processes during pivotal nineteenth-century transitions. Surely, constants remained. Negative perceptions of Brazil, for instance, carried on from their heyday in the early 1850s, when the German version of the "white slavery" trope gathered strength following Brazil's illegal slave trade ban. Such views pervaded German public opinion well into the 1890s

and early 1900s, when some writers in Germany sought to make sense of the experience of abused sharecroppers in São Paulo half a century earlier (Witzel de Souza, 2021). Yet in that precise mid-century era crisis remained the foremost certainty. Prussia found itself in the midst of a monarchical succession. The Brazilian Empire traversed the rocky post-conciliation years (1853-1856) with its ministers trying to navigate the challenging diplomacy of defending Brazilian planters from serious claims of *colono* abuses. And, more globally, the supposed *pax* of the post-Napoleonic period began to unravel, in a trend that included Prussia on the cusp of renewed regional tensions with Napoléon III that would eventually lead to the Franco-Prussian War, as well as Brazil, which would soon become embroiled in the Paraguayan War or War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870), a massive and protracted regional conflict in which it held the largest army. In lockstep with martial build-ups, economic crises ramped up in terms of their capacity to inflict international damage. The panic of 1857 thus became a trial run for financial meltdowns that would only exacerbate with the panic of 1873 (Guimarães, 2012, p. 188-189). But, despite these economic shocks, transatlantic steamship lines only strengthened their operations. The gradual elimination of brokerage and agents, which the Heydt Rescript hastened, also contributed to the consolidation of major companies such as the *Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt Actiengesellschaft* and the *Bremen-based Norddeutscher Lloyd*, which, as Dirk Hoerder (1993) has discussed, transformed the role of Bremen and Hamburg from emigrant ports to corporate-driven global shipping hubs.

Figure 2 – Adolph Menzel, "The Coronation of King Wilhelm I in Königsberg in 1861" (c.1861-1865), Sanssouci Palace, Potsdam, Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg (Image sourced from Wikiart, <https://www.wikiart.org/>).

If historians continue to latch the Heydt Rescript and its possible meanings to a nationally and often regionally bound causality centered on the Ibicaba sharecroppers' revolt, it would be important for them to carry out due diligence in addressing and further exploring the wider contextual meanings laid out or hypothesized here. Indeed, looking more frontally at von der Heydt himself and the overlapping processes that fed into his adamant emigration restriction helps to shine a light on a rich if analytically fractured backdrop that rightfully places the occurrences in Brazil, and more particularly in São Paulo, in the broader global interplay of shifting historical variables. To be sure, such a contextual perspective necessitates a broad panoramic view or perhaps a series of group portraits of the actors involved rather than a relief perspective in the style of Menzel's study sketch. Perhaps it would be fitting, then, to refer back to Menzel's completed oil painting (Figure 2), which also offered a fitting interpretive key to understand the Heydt Rescript anew: in the bottom

corner, to the right, there stands August von der Heydt, his posture, dignified and stately, anchoring the painting's darkest edge. His unobstructed back almost connotes a readiness to exit, as if at any time he could turn around and leave the canvas. One is reminded of his precarious standing upon the rise of Wilhelm I yet also of his deep-seated conviction in monarchical authority, which made him back even ill-fated reforms against a liberal parliament while at the same time upholding constitutional principles. It is therefore tempting then to consider whether the Heydt Rescript represented not so much a diplomatic battle cry or a reprimand against Brazil, but rather an expression of its author's loyalty to ministerial duty, or perhaps a final act on his way out.

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