**“The most rigid Republicans are transformed as if by magic”: Carl Sartorius, Hacienda Mirador and the forgotten liberal support for the Mexican Empire**

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The short-lived rule of Habsburg archduke Maximilian in Mexico between 1864 and 1867 has traditionally been presented as an historical aberration or anecdote that was largely ridiculed by contemporaneous observers. Yet, closer inspection reveals that not only Mexican conservatives but a politically diverse group of prominent actors on both sides of the Atlantic pinned different hopes on the establishment of a monarchy in the ‘New World’ and often even actively supported it.

A particularly striking example is Carl Sartorius, a former ‘demagogue’ and political refugee who left Central Europe in the 1820s and ended up as a farmer, amateur scientist and founder of the plantation settlement Hacienda Mirador in Eastern Mexico. Disillusioned by constant political turmoil in the Mexican Republic, Sartorius became one of several liberal supporters of Maximilian and his efforts to re-organize Mexico. Drawing on new archival findings, the colloquium presentation will highlight the role of Sartorius as an informal political advisor to Emperor Maximilian on issues such as colonization and agricultural reforms. More generally, it will also underline the significance the Mexican Empire had for liberals in Europe and America.

The talk builds on a PhD project that seeks to unearth the forgotten history of Hacienda Mirador between the 1820s and 1870s. Focusing on the intersection between colonization efforts, plantation capitalism and science, it intertwines Mexico’s uneven state building process with the phenomenon of European emigration to the Americas between the 1820s and the 1870s. Through the lenses of global microhistory, the project also sheds new light on the role of seemingly peripheric settlements as hidden, yet globally connected spaces of informal imperial expansion in Latin America.