Behind the Bull’s Eye:
Brazilian Postal Reforms in the first half of the Nineteenth Century (1829–1844)
Pérola Maria Goldfeder e Castro, Ph.D.
History Department, University of São Paulo – USP

Abstract

The institutionalization of the Brazilian Postal Services occurred simultaneously with European and American experiences, even getting ahead compared to many other countries in the world. Throughout the first half of the Nineteenth Century, Brazilian Post Office has undergone various institutional reforms, among which the most important was the creation of the Diretoria Geral dos Correios (General Post Office) by the Emperor Don Pedro 1st, in 5 March 1829.

Brazil was also the third country to join the English model for Postal Reform, being preceded only by England itself and the canton of Zurich: In 1842, the Brazilian Central Government fixed a 60 réis rate for letters whose weight did not exceed 4 oitavas, being added 30 réis to this amount, for every two exceeded weight. This payment should be identified by a stamp, which became popularly known as Olho de Boi (Bull's Eye).

Given the importance of Public Services for the consolidation of national states, the research notes that I am about to present seeks to contribute to Postal History Studies by analyzing some political and institutional aspects that characterized Brazilian Postal Reforms between 1829 and 1844. Therefore, in the Brazilian Postal Reforms, there were in competition not only different models of Public Administration, but also different conceptions of Monarchy and State Building.

Key words: Brazil; General Post Office; Postal Reform; Public Administration; Monarchical Order; Nineteenth Century.