



Crisis Simulation

The Empire of Brazil (Novice)

Hoda Vohra and Tanvi Palavalas
Co-Chairs



GSMUN XXVI
United We Stand

The Empire of Brazil

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates and Sponsors,

Welcome to GSMUN XXVI's novice Empire of Brazil Committee! Your chairs are so excited to meet all of you! As delegates in the Empire of Brazil committee, you will delve into the historical context and diplomatic intricacies of this fascinating era. Set in the 19th century, the committee focuses on the Empire of Brazil's political landscape, socio-economic dynamics, and international relations during this period.

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Hoda Vohra, one of your co-chairs, is a junior and has been involved in Model UN since sixth grade. She loves public speaking and helping others to foster their public speaking skills. Aside from Model UN, Hoda is a public relations officer for Spanish Club, a member of the Debate Team, a writer for the school's newspaper: the Jabberwock, a part of the school's orchestra alongside the orchestra club: Cantante, and is a member of the cross country team at MLWGS. In her free time, Hoda enjoys playing tennis with friends, running, painting and drawing still life pieces, and baking for her Instagram baking account. She looks forward to meeting everyone and making this one of the best conferences yet!

Tanvi Palavalas is ecstatic to serve as co-chair for the Empire of Brazil! As a junior at Maggie Walker, it is her third year being involved in GSMUN and her sixth year participating in Model UN. Besides honing her public speaking skills and serving as treasurer for Maggie Walker's Model UN club, Tanvi takes part in Maggie Walker's Cross Country, Swim, and Bhangra teams, while writing and taking pictures for the Jabberwock, Maggie Walker's student publication. In her free time, she enjoys making Spotify playlists, driving to Taco Bell, and FaceTiming her friends at inappropriate times. Tanvi can't wait to meet everyone and is looking forward to the 26th iteration of GSMUN!

As delegates of this committee, your preparation should revolve around the historical context, political events, and diplomatic challenges of the Empire of Brazil during the 19th century. Delegates should prepare solutions to the issues proposed by both topics, know and understand the terms associated with both issues and analyze the questions proposed in the background guides. Delegates are expected to prepare a position paper following the guidelines of the Chicago Manual of Style; position papers should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font. Delegates should send their position papers prior to the start of the committee to the chair email, gsmunxxvi.brazil@gmail.com. Upholding the Maggie Walker honor code is imperative, and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

When coming to GSMUN, you will quickly pick up that we love giving back to the community! This year's partner charity is the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, a nonprofit organization which has been the largest nonprofit funder of blood cancer research since 1949. With that being said, be sure to bring money with you to buy treats and merchandise from GSMUN's charity cart. There may also be incentives in your committee, so be sure to bring money for donations! All proceeds will go towards the Leukemia & Lymphoma society.

For any questions, concerns, or feedback on your position papers, feel free to reach out to your chairs at gsmunxxvi.brazil@gmail.com. We are eagerly anticipating insightful debates and collaborative efforts as we explore the rich history of the Empire of Brazil. See you at GSMUN XXVI, and good luck!

Your Chairs,

Hoda Vohra.
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Tanvi Palavalas

Empire of Brazil

Committee Overview

Background

In the heart of South America, the Empire of Brazil emerges as a central focus of discussion. As this conference delves into the intricate history of this nation, delegates will grapple with the multifaceted challenges faced by Brazil during the late 19th century. This transformative period, characterized by the transition from monarchy to republic, witnessed significant upheaval in both the military and economic spheres.

At the core of this committee's deliberations lies the critical issue of rebuilding the Brazilian military. The late 19th-century shift from monarchy to republic triggered an intense transformation in Brazil's military landscape. Internal divisions, resource constraints, and a lack of cohesive leadership plagued the armed forces during this period. The transition from monarchy to republic brought far-reaching implications for military personnel and civilians alike as they navigated the challenges of a rapidly evolving socio-political environment. Delegates will explore the intricacies of this military transformation and seek comprehensive solutions to address the concerns of militaristic movements while forging a strong and unified Brazilian military.

In tandem with the military transition, the economic redevelopment of Brazil also takes center stage. The shift from monarchy to republic paralleled a fundamental change in the nation's economic foundations. With slavery as the linchpin of the previous economy, characterized by the production of commodities such as coffee and sugar, Brazil faced the monumental task of economic restructuring. Delegates will examine the economic challenges and opportunities that emerged during this period of transition, including issues related to labor, agriculture,

and international competition. Crafting viable solutions to propel Brazil toward economic stability and growth will be paramount.

As delegates delve into the historical intricacies of the Empire of Brazil, they must grapple with the complexities of this era, drawing upon their diplomatic skills, historical insights, and innovative thinking to navigate the path to resolution. The committee will explore the nuances of these topics, drawing from historical records, analysis, and creative problem-solving to shed light on the challenges and possibilities that defined this pivotal moment in Brazilian history.

Topic I: Rebuilding the Military History of the Issue

The late 19th-century transition from monarchy to republic in Brazil brought about a seismic shift in the nation's military landscape, sparking a tumultuous period spanning the 1890s to the early 1900s. The dissolution of the Empire of Brazil plunged the armed forces into chaos, characterized by internal divisions, resource shortages, and a dearth of cohesive leadership. The transition from monarchy to republic had profound implications for both military personnel and civilians, as they grappled with the challenges of a rapidly evolving socio-political environment.

The military's hierarchical structure, which accentuated societal disparities, encountered profound social and economic challenges. Soldiers and officers, often hailing from lower socio-economic backgrounds, endured substandard living conditions and meager wages, exacerbating divisions within the military ranks. This internal rift was further inflamed by various factional movements, each driven by distinct grievances and demands. Notable among these were the

Federalist Revolt (1893-1895) and the Revolta da Armada in 1893, which underscored the fragmented state of the armed forces.¹

The political instability prevalent in the Brazilian Republic compounded the military's woes. Frequent leadership changes and a lack of a clear vision for the military's role fueled turmoil. Additionally, the decline of the empire led to economic challenges with inadequate funding, equipment, and training opportunities hampering the armed forces' ability to maintain discipline and effectively fulfill their duties. Following the fall of the Empire of Brazil, this period witnessed a tumultuous transformation of the military landscape. The interplay of divisions, socio-economic disparities, and political uncertainties necessitates a comprehensive approach to address militaristic concerns and reconstruct a strong and unified Brazilian military.

Current Status of the Issue

The socioeconomic fabric of the First Republic of Brazil sheds light on the nation's economic foundation. Prior to the Empire of Brazil's demise, the nation's economy revolved around agriculture, a characteristic that persisted at the outset of the First Republic. The elite class, who once held sway over Brazil, regained control only in 1898.² Upon their return to power, they resumed the production of resources such as coffee, rubber, sugar, tobacco, and other natural commodities. This small group of aristocrats formed an oligarchy that focused on maximizing resource production, capitalizing on Brazil's status as the source of 75% of the world's coffee supply.³

However, Brazil faced stiff international competition, prompting a reduction in export prices to bolster profits. Despite this strategy, the Brazilian economy languished, with the nation's currency depreciating against foreign counterparts, particularly the British pound.⁴ The resultant spike in import prices led to reduced

consumption, compounding the nation's economic woes. Brazil found itself unable to service its foreign debt, leading to the collapse of numerous banks. The oligarchy's primary goal was resource maximization, facilitated by employing cheap labor, reminiscent of the previous slavery system, to maintain social status and economic support. This approach raised ethical and social concerns.⁵

Analysis and Solutions

In contemplating solutions to the complex challenges surrounding the rebuilding of the Brazilian military during the late 19th century, several pivotal strategies emerge.

Firstly, there exists an urgent imperative to reform the governmental structure. Central to this endeavor is the question of how such reforms would affect both the entrenched land-holding elite, constituting the oligarchy, and the general public, presently serving as a source of cheap labor. The transition towards a more inclusive and representative government offers the potential to redress prevailing social and economic inequalities. Secondly, addressing the issue of cheap labor assumes the utmost importance. To prevent the perpetuation of a system reminiscent of forced labor, Brazil must undertake measures to ensure laborers receive equitable wages and enjoy decent working conditions. This necessitates the enactment of legislation and policies aimed at protecting workers' rights and preserving their dignity. Thirdly, the question of constitutional revisions lingers. Should Brazil contemplate the drafting of a new constitution as a means of rebalancing power? Such a constitutional overhaul holds promise for achieving a fairer distribution of political influence and resources, potentially mitigating existing disparities. Furthermore, Brazil must assess its export strategy. Should the nation persist in its singular focus on coffee as its primary export, or should it explore diversification into other resources? An in-depth examination of the

economic ramifications of concentrating on a solitary agricultural product and its repercussions on economic stability becomes imperative for informed decision-making. Lastly, the circumstances under which Brazil can embark on the reconstruction of its economic infrastructure warrant meticulous scrutiny. Factors contributing to potential risks in this recovery endeavor, as well as the elite class's optimal approach to navigate this intricate process, demand meticulous consideration.

In conclusion, addressing these multifaceted challenges mandates a holistic and deliberative approach, encompassing governmental reform, labor rights, constitutional amendments, export diversification, and judicious economic revitalization.

Questions to Consider

1. How would reforming the government structure affect both sides of the situation: the land-holding elite class forming the oligarchy and the general public who currently serve as cheap labor?
2. In what sense does the idea of cheap labor relate to slavery, and how can this be changed to eliminate enslavement-like policies?
3. Should Brazil consider drafting a new constitution in order to balance power and address social and economic disparities?
4. Should Brazil continue growing and exporting coffee to gain a spot in the economic market or focus on other resources as well? How will focusing on one particular aspect of their agriculture affect their ability to grow as a country?
5. Under what circumstances will it be possible for Brazil to continue building its economic infrastructure? What are the risks of rebuilding, and

how should the elite class approach this?

Further Research

1. https://medium.com/@The_Historian/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-brazilian-empire-45cee76b6750: Offers a surface level summary of the Empire of Brazil.
2. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43189031>: Delves into the influence of Portuguese traditions and the Holy See on military orders during Brazil's transition to an independent nation, offering valuable historical insights into this transformative period.
3. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27868707>: Explores the historical evolution of military professionalism and its political implications, providing a critical analysis of the country's military history during this century.
4. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv51309x.9>: Provides an in-depth exploration of Brazil's historical journey toward democracy, offering valuable insights into the nation's political evolution.
5. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90007840>: Presents an extensive empirical demonstration of Brazil's integration into the capitalist world-economy from 1550 to approximately 1800.

Topic II: Economic Redevelopment History of the Issue

The shift between the monarchy to republic in Brazil simultaneously represented the shift in the presence of slavery in the country. Brazil's economy was built on the foundation of slavery. Slaves were the most important part of the economy, stabilizing it by "producing" all the wealth from the plantations. Coffee and sugar were some of the main exports in Brazil's agriculture-based economy. Before coffee became a prevalent export, which was mainly in the later parts of

the 19th century, other natural resources were more prevalent. However, this led to a lack of basic industrialization in the region due to a reliance on slavery. The end of the empire sees a shift with this.⁶

The elite class, which consisted of the land-holders who controlled the production of goods such as sugar, held most of the power. These landholders had the majority of the political power in Brazil, meaning that any changes in the presence of slavery were required to be approved by them. Therefore, slavery was only gradually abolished starting in 1831, when the Brazilian emperor started the abolition only at Great Britain's request. However, the transatlantic slave trade took longer to stop, finally ending in the 1860s. Finally in 1871, The Law of the Free Womb was passed, outlining that the offspring of slaves would be born free. Even so, the children would have to work until they were adults to compensate the slaveholders. With continued lobbying and protests from Brazilian abolitionists, a 1884 law was passed that finally freed enslaved people over 60 years of age. Considering that the majority of slaves didn't live till 60, this law still left the majority of social and political power in the hands of wealthy slave owners. Finally, on May 13, 1888, 700,000 slaves were freed in Brazil, ending the region's torrid relationship with enslavement.

Current Status of the Issue

The social makeup of the First Republic of Brazil explains the way in which the economy was built. Before the end of the Empire of Brazil, Brazil was very agriculture-based. However, the elite that once controlled Brazil did not have power over the Republic again until 1898. Once they took control of Brazil again, the same resources of coffee, rubber, sugar, tobacco, and other natural resources were produced. The small group of aristocratic elite then merged into an oligarchy, focusing on producing and exporting the maximum amount of Brazil's

resources. At one point, 75% of the coffee supplied throughout the world originally came solely from Brazil.

Due to their comparably diminished economy, Brazil would lower the prices of their exports for expanded profit gain. Even with this tactic used, the Brazilian economy plundered. The Brazilian currency was devalued against other currencies such as the British pound.⁷ This resulted in a decrease of government revenue because the prices of imports rose greatly while consumption lowered. Brazil, unable to repay foreign debt, was at a standstill as the banks crashed and the people plunged into poverty, forced once again to be a source of cheap labor for the development of improved infrastructure.

With the main focus of maximum output and profit for the oligarchy, the majority of the population became unskilled laborers, leading to mass social inequality, as the wealthy retained their social status while only minimally supporting the economy.⁸

Analysis and Solutions

With the remnants of slavery still fresh in Brazil, it is important to recognize how forced and cheap labor cannot be sustained and how it will eventually lead to riots, rebellion, and the downfall of Brazil's government and society. With much of the elite actively encouraging cheap and low-paid labor, much of the population endures unsafe and unsustainable working conditions. Additionally, racist basis is prevalent, as evident through the voting restrictions placed against citizens of color through literacy tests and grandfather clauses. With the accumulation of wealth by a certain few, social unrest has risen, leading to an increased need of regulation in the workforce. However, with the economy and social climate so fragile, this must be done with consideration and delicacy to prevent outright rebellion. This could be done by centralizing the government, forcing all of the industries under stricter regulations. However, Brazil's government currently is a

representative parliamentary constitutional monarchy. This combined with the voter restrictions placed on Brazil's large minority population has led to inadequate representation and approval in laws and public policy passed.

There is a very easy solution to the immediate economic problems. Because most of Brazil's wealth comes from their exports of coffee, swaying away from the industry could crash that portion of the economy altogether. However, with better treatment of workers comes increased costs of goods, perhaps weakening the hold that Brazil has on international demand and industries.

Questions to Consider

1. How would reforming the government structure affect both sides of the situation: the land-holding elite class forming the oligarchy and the general public who currently serves as the cheap labor?
2. In what sense does the idea of cheap labor relate to slavery and how can this be changed in order for there to be no enslavement-like policies?
3. Should Brazil consider drafting a new constitution in order to balance the power?
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resources as well? How will focusing on one particular aspect of their agriculture affect their ability to grow as a country?

5. Under what circumstances will it be possible for Brazil to continue building its economic infrastructure? What are the risks of rebuilding and how should the elite class approach this?

Further Research

1. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Brazil/Independence>: Describes the means in which Brazil gained its independence giving sufficient background information and also information on the general rulers in the Empire of Brazil.
2. <https://library.brown.edu/create/five-centuriesofchange/chapters/chapter-3/coffee/>: Highlights Brazil's main source of income in order to emphasize how important this resource is to the country.
3. <https://library.brown.edu/create/five-centuriesofchange/chapters/chapter-4/>: Explains briefly the situation Brazil faced in the beginning of the First Republic.
4. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/slavery-brazil>: Explains the chronology of slavery in Brazil.

Endnotes

1. Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture., Encyclopedia.Com. 10 Jan. 2024, Encyclopedia.com, February 5, 2024, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/federalist-revolt-1893>.
2. Esposito Karina Faria Garcia, "Naval Diplomacy and the Making of an Unwritten Alliance: United States-Brazilian Naval Relations, 1893-1930," *Naval Diplomacy and the Making of an Unwritten Alliance: United States-Brazilian Naval Relations, 1893-1930* (thesis, n.d.).
3. Ori Preuss, "Brazil into Latin America: The Demise of Slavery and Monarchy as Transnational Events," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 49, no. 1 (2012): 99, JSTOR.
4. Pedro Antonio Vieira, "'Brazil' In the Capitalist World-Economy from 1550 to C. 1800," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 37, no. 1 (2014), JSTOR.
5. Leslie Bethell, "Britain and Brazil (1808–1914)," in *Brazil: Essays on History and Politics* (n.p.: University of London Press, 2018), 37-41, JSTOR.
6. "Brazil: Five Centuries of Change," *Brown University Library: Center for Digital Scholarship*, February 5, 2024, <https://library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/chapters/chapter-3/coffee/>.
7. "Computing 'Real Value' Over Time With a Conversion Between U.K. Pounds and U.S. Dollars, 1774 to Present," *Measuring Worth*, February 5, 2024, https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/exchange/result_exchall.php?action=&iyear=1880&dyear=1890&ivalue=1&itype=pound.
8. "The Old or First Republic, 1889-1930," *Country Studies U.S., U.S. Library of Congress*, February 5, 2024, <https://countrystudies.us/brazil/15.htm>.

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