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Relations between the First Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire (1889–1917): two giants with different ideas?

Bruno Quadros and Quadros Independent scholar, Brasilia, Brazil, bquadrosequadros@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper is a factual reconstitution of the relationship between the First Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire (1889–1917), dealing with aspects such as the Russian recognition of the Brazilian Republic (1892), the trade and political relations, cultural and scientific exchange, immigration and the impact of the two 1917 Russian Revolutions on the bilateral relationship. Based on the primary sources (Brazilian diplomatic archives) and the relevant bibliography on the subject, the paper aims to analyze to what extent the ideological factor, expressed by the dynastic solidarity between the Romanovs and the Orléans e Bragança and by the opposition between the monarchical and republican conceptions of government, represented a determining factor for the bilateral relations between Brazil and Russia during the period. Besides, the research seeks to highlight other elements that have played a role (trade, cultural and scientific exchange, and immigration) in the dynamics of the interactions between Rio de Janeiro and St. Petersburg, notwithstanding the geographical distance between them.

Keywords: Brazil-Russia relations, Proclamation of the Republic in Brazil (1889), First Brazilian Republic (1889–1930), "Old Republic" in Brazil, Russian Empire

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Отношения Первой Бразильской республики и Российской империи (1889–1917): два гиганта с разными идеями?

Бруно Квадрос и Квадрос Независимый исследователь, Бразилиа, Бразилия, bquadrosequadros@gmail.com

Аннотация. Эта статья представляет собой фактическую реконструкцию отношений между Первой Бразильской республикой и Российской империей (1889–1917 гг.), в которой рассматриваются такие аспекты, как признание Россией Бразильской Республики (1892 г.), торговля, политические отношения, культурный и научный обмен, иммиграция и влияние двух русских революций 1917 г. на двусторонние отношения. На основе первоисточников (дипломатических архивов Бразилии) и соответствующей библиографии по теме в статье ставится задача проанализировать, в какой степени идеологический фактор, выраженный в династической солидарности между Романовыми и Орлеанами-Браганса, а также в противостоянии монархических и республиканских концепций правления, представлял собой определяющий фактор для двусторонних отношений между Бразилией и Россией в тот период. Кроме того, исследование стремится выделить другие факторы (такие как торговля, культурный и научный обмен и иммиграция), которые оказали влияние на динамику взаимодействия между Рио-де-Жанейро и Санкт-Петербургом, несмотря на географическое расстояние между ними.

Ключевые слова: российско-бразильские отношения, провозглашение республики в Бразилии (1889 г.), Первая Бразильская республика (1889—1930), «Старая республика» в Бразилии, Российская империя

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Introduction

Background. Russia recognized Brazil as independent in 1827, and the two countries established diplomatic relations the following year. According to Paulo Vizentini, relations between the two empires were based above all on the dynastic dimension, given the low value of trade and mutual strategic interests [Zhebit 2009, pp. 68–69].

Relations between Brazil's First Republic and the Russian Empire were preceded by remarkable events, such as Baron de Langsdorff's scientific expedition to Brazil in the 1820s, which covered more than 16 000 kilometers in the Brazilian interior and collected thousands of specimens of tropical fauna².

The attempts by the Russian representative in Brazil, Franz Borel, to deepen bilateral trade served as inspiration for the signing of the 1847 agreement on customs franchises, which established reciprocal tariffs and remained in force until 1896 [Zhebit 2009, pp. 37–38].

Pedro II's trip to Russia in 1876 was the first visit by a Brazilian head of state to the country and represented an important moment for the rapprochement between the House of Romanov and the House of Orléans and Bragança and for increasing mutual knowledge between the two societies.

Finally, Brazil's participation in the St. Petersburg International Exhibition (1884), which was attended by the future Baron of Rio Branco, was fundamental in spreading the consumption of coffee in Russia and increasing the interest of Russian society in Brazil³.

Methodology

The article was based on primary sources, such as the *diplomatic* archive of the recognition of the Republic and the annual reports of the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, which were fundamental to the study of issues such as Russian recognition of the Brazilian Republic and the Brazilian-Russian convergence at the Second Hague Peace Conference (1907).

Although the bibliography on the subject is scarce, it was useful in preparing the sections on trade and immigration, in particular the works by Komissarov⁴ and Zhebit [Zhebit 2009].

The research problem was to analyze the extent to which the ideological factor, expressed in elements such as dynastic solidarity between the House of Romanov and the deposed House of Orléans and Bragança

² Degtiareva M. Acervo revela história das relações diplomáticas entre Rússia e Brasil // Gazeta Russa. 2012. 13 Nov. URL: https://br.rbth.com/articles/2012/11/13/acervo_revela_historia_das_relacoes_diplomaticas_entre russia e bras 16413 (Accessed 22 May 2024).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Разговор с Борисом Комиссаровым: Страны-миры, которые обязаны сотрудничать. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20211026085439/http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/524/189/1217/5.pdf (Accessed 22 May 2024).

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and the opposition between the republican and monarchical conceptions of government, represented a conditioning factor for the course of bilateral relations in the period.

Thus, the objectives of this work are:

- a) to carry out a systematic factual reconstruction of Brazilian-Russian relations between 1889 and 1917;
- b) to analyze the impact of the ideological factor on bilateral interactions; and
- c) to establish a global understanding of the elements that conditioned the relationship between the First Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire.

Literature review. The literature on the subject is scarce. Flávio Castro [Castro 1993, pp. 111–112] refers to the "hibernal relationship" between Brazil and Russia in the period between 1892 and 1917, due to the lack of any relevant facts in bilateral relations.

Boris Komissarov, one of the leading experts on Russian-Brazilian relations during the 19th century, characterizes the interactions between Rio de Janeiro and St. Petersburg as "cold" until 1893 [Zhebit 2009, p. 14], perhaps due to the Russian delay in recognizing the republican regime in Brazil.

Komissarov⁵ also points out that the fact that Brazil and Russia belong to different systems of states – Brazil, to the inter-American system; Russia, between Europe and Asia – has caused the two countries to move in different orbits, hindering the deepening of bilateral relations.

However, other authors with recognized works on the study of Brazilian-Russian relations, such as Lytton Guimarães [Guimarães 2000] and Graciela Zubelzú de Bacigalupo [Bacigalupo 2000], don't even address the interactions between the First Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire in the part of their work dedicated to the history of bilateral relations. Barbara Jelavich [Jelavich 1974], author of one of the most highly regarded manuals on the history of the Russian Empire's foreign policy, doesn't even mention Brazil or Latin America in her work.

Russia's recognition of the republic (1889–1892)

The Proclamation of the Republic and unofficial relations (1889). On November 18, 1889, three days after the Proclamation of the Republic, Brazilian Chancellor Quintino Bocaiúva sent a communication to the

⁵ Ibid.

Russian Legation in Rio de Janeiro, informing them of the recent political change in Brazil and the establishment of a Provisional Government in the country⁶.

At the beginning of December, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Russian Legation in Brazil, P. Bogdanov, acknowledged receipt of the communication addressed to him by Quintino Bocaiúva; in the same period, Bocaiúva sent correspondence to the head of the Brazilian Legation in Russia, A.S. Teixeira de Macedo, informing him that Bogdanov was authorized by the Russian government to unofficially continue relations with Brazil⁷.

At the beginning of December 1889, Teixeira de Macedo delivered to the Russian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (in the absence of Chancellor Nikolai Girs) a note sent by Chancellor Bocaiúva to the Russian government. In an audience with Chancellor Girs, Teixeira de Macedo was informed of the Russian government's willingness to maintain unofficial relations with Brazil⁸.

Russian resistance to recognizing the Republic (1889–1890). In a communication dated December 21, 1889, Teixeira de Macedo reported on the response he had received from Minister Girs, after his audience with the Tsar. Girs revealed that he would leave the Brazilian note requesting recognition of government unanswered until he observed the conduct of other governments, and that Russia would certainly not be one of the first states to recognize the new order of things in Brazil⁹.

On that occasion. Girs revealed to Teixeira de Macedo that:

...my <Teixeira de Macedo's> presence here would soon embarrass the government, as the summons to the reception [held on January 1st, at which the embassies and legations of friendly countries present themselves to the Tsar] is an annual confirmation of the good understanding that exists between the countries that cultivate friendly relations with Russia¹0.

The imbroglio involved St. Petersburg considering that inviting the Brazilian representative to the reception would imply formal recognition of the new Brazilian government. Teixeira de Macedo summed up what was at stake:

⁶ Brancato S.M.L. Arquivo diplomático do reconhecimento da República. Brasília: Ministério das Relacões Exteriores, 1993. Vol. 2. P. 206.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. P. 206–207.

⁹ Ibid. P. 207–208.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 208.

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To exclude Brazil from this ceremony is not to consider it among the nations that are friends of Russia; to invite its unofficial representative is to treat it in its official capacity, which implies the formal recognition of its government¹¹.

Faced with this impasse, Teixeira de Macedo asked Bocaiúva to remove him or authorize his absence from the post, as "...the solution that would best undo what should not be made apparent, the exclusion of my country from among the number of recognized states" ¹².

In a communication dated January 11, 1890, Teixeira de Macedo reported that his illness was convenient and served as a justification for the letter he wrote to Chancellor Girs, asking him to apologize to the Tsar for not being able to attend the ceremony on January 1st, 1890. Thanks to this maneuver, which covered up the real reason for Brazil's absence from the ceremony, "...the respective official sensitivities will be saved for the time being"¹³.

In this correspondence, an analysis of what was behind Russia's non-recognition of the new Brazilian government emerged for the first time. In the words of Teixeira de Macedo:

The government of the Republic must realize that Russia's sympathy for Brazil was based solely on our old monarchical institutions, which it believed to be as solid as its own. Once these have disappeared, we have entered, for the Tsar, the list of nations whose friendship is based not on peace but on armistice, with mutual relations replacing sympathy with more or less apparent disdain, depending on the interests at stake (emphasis added)¹⁴.

In correspondence dated January 27, 1890, Teixeira de Macedo reported that, for reasons of political expediency – that is, the need to maintain appearances to cover up Russia's non-recognition of the new Brazilian government – he had been forced to prolong his illness as a justification for not attending the great religious festival of the blessing of the waters (held on January 6) and the great ball at the Court (held on January 14). Macedo insisted on the inconvenience of prolonging his position, asking the Ministry to grant him leave due to ill health¹⁵:

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. P. 208-209.

¹³ Ibid. P. 209.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 211–212.

In these circumstances, however, since we have no major interests here, why maintain an idle and currently embarrassing Legation? For my part, every day it becomes more urgent to leave this climate that is eating away at my health and sapping my strength¹⁶.

On January 30, 1890, the Viscount of Cabo Frio, in his capacity as Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs – since Quintino Bocaiúva was on a special mission to the River Plate to negotiate the Treaty of Montevideo on the Question of Palmas – responded to Teixeira de Macedo's request. Cabo Frio believed that the explanation given by the representative of the Brazilian Legation in Russia would not be enough to persuade Chancellor Bocaiúva to change what he had decided, i. e. that Macedo should remain in Russia, continuing relations unofficially. Cabo Frio stated that he did not consider himself authorized to decide otherwise¹⁷.

In a letter dated August 12, 1890, Teixeira de Macedo – who was already in Brazil – explained the acts of courtesy (mainly farewell visits) that he had to perform as a result of his departure from Russia. Two days after requesting an audience with the Tsar from Chancellor Girs, Teixeira de Macedo met the Russian Emperor at the Gatchina residence, with all the pomp of Russian ceremonial. The Brazilian representative was questioned extensively by Alexander III about Brazil's internal situation and noted "…in all the language and assessments of H.M. <the Tsar> a choice of attentive expressions that could never hurt either the present or the past political situation of our country" 18.

In the same letter, Teixeira de Macedo reported that he had also paid farewell visits to other members of the Russian imperial family, the diplomatic corps accredited in St. Petersburg and the country's official high society¹⁹.

Two days after the audience with the Tsar, Teixeira de Macedo received from Chancellor Girs the insignia of the Grand Cross First Class of the Order of St. Stanislaus, a commendation that the Tsar used to give to foreign representatives who distinguished themselves in the fulfillment of their missions²⁰.

Russia's recognition of the Republic (1892). Almost two years after Teixeira de Macedo left Russia, Serzedello Corrêa, the new Brazilian

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 210.

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 212-213.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 213-214.

¹⁹ Ibid. P. 214.

²⁰ Ibid.

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Chancellor, in a letter dated April 22, 1892, reported to Chancellor Girs on recent events in Brazil, namely the promulgation of the 1891 Constitution, the election of the President and Vice-President of the Republic, the resignation of Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca and the inauguration of Marshal Floriano Peixoto as President of the Republic²¹.

In the same correspondence, Corrêa informed his Russian counterpart that President Floriano had chosen Francisco Regis de Oliveira as Brazil's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Russia; Corrêa asked Girs that the Tsar accept this choice and thereby recognize the new Brazilian government²².

In correspondence dated June 7, 1892, Girs informed Serzedello Corrêa that the Tsar had agreed to the appointment of Francisco Regis de Oliveira to the post of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Brazil in Russia²³. This is considered to be the milestone in the Russian Empire's recognition of the government of the Republic of the United States of Brazil.

In a letter dated August 8, 1892, Francisco Regis de Oliveira, the new head of the Brazilian Legation in Russia, informed Chancellor Custódio de Mello about the meeting to hand over credentials to the Tsar, held on August 7 at Peterhof Palace. According to Oliveira, "<t>he Emperor's haste in receiving me three days after I had asked him for an audience shows the pleasure with which he saw the resumption of official relations between Brazil and Russia"²⁴.

At the meeting with the Tsar, the Brazilian representative expressed "...his satisfaction at seeing the resumption of relations between Brazil and Russia, which had been temporarily interrupted by the peaceful change of our institutions". The Tsar said that "he was surprised that our <Brazilian> government had not given him the opportunity to recognize it earlier" and replied to Regis de Oliveira "...with great affability, returning the same expressions and telling me that the delay in recognizing the Republic was not due to him, since he had only recently received official notification of its legal institution"²⁵.

This revelation by Alexander III gives rise to tentative explanations for Russia's late recognition of the republican regime in Brazil. Although the ideological factor had an influence on St. Petersburg's resistance to recognizing the new Brazilian government in the months immediately following the Proclamation of the Republic, as is attested to in Teixeira

²¹ Ibid. P. 215-216.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. P. 215.

²⁴ Ibid. P. 217–218.

²⁵ Ibid.

de Macedo's correspondence to Itamaraty of January 11, 1890, other factors had an influence on Russian non-recognition over time.

It is possible that the Russians waited for the death of Pedro II in 1891 and the exhaustion of any possibility of monarchical restoration before recognizing the Republic [Zhebit, 2009, p. 38]. Brazil's delay in appointing a successor to Teixeira de Macedo, who left Russia in mid-1890, may have meant one less incentive for the Russian government to recognize the Republic.

Finally, the Tsar's argument that it had only recently received official notification of the "legal institution" of the republican regime provides evidence that the Russian government was awaiting the constitutionalization of the Provisional Government – described in Serzedello Corrêa's letter to De Geers, dated 22 April 1892 – before recognizing it. Consequently, this indicates the possibility that the Russian government ignored the communication of November 18, 1889 from Quintino Bocaiúva to the Russian Legation in Rio de Janeiro, informing of the Proclamation of the Republic, as the manifestation of a legitimate government, which can be attributed to the Russian emphasis on the legitimacy of dynastic houses and the political instability and succession of military coups that characterized Latin America at that time.

In the same correspondence of August 8, 1892, Regis de Oliveira highlighted the Tsar's courtesy in not once mentioning Brazil's former monarchical regime, nor the circumstances that led to the Proclamation of the Republic. The Tsar ended the meeting "...by wishing Brazil to continue in peace and tranquillity so that it can continue its progressive march"²⁶.

The appointment of the Russian representative in Brazil (1892–1893). Once the Republic was recognized by Russia and contact was established between Regis de Oliveira and the Tsar, the question of the appointment of the Russian representative in Brazil remained unresolved. On August 6, 1892, P. Bodganov sent a note to the Brazilian Chancellor, Custódio de Mello, informing him of his return to Rio de Janeiro and his resumption of his duties as Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Brazil²⁷.

It remained to be seen, however, who Russia would appoint as its permanent representative as Minister to Brazil. In correspondence dated September 5, 1892, Francisco Regis de Oliveira reported to Chancellor Custódio de Mello that, in a conference with Mr. Chichkin (deputy to the Russian Foreign Minister), the holder of the post in Brazil was

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. P. 219.

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Alexander Ionin, who, being on regular leave for health reasons, could only return to Brazil after January 1893²⁸.

Chichkin added that Russia regretted not being able to reciprocate Brazil's courtesy by sending its representative at the same time as Brazil had sent its own to Russia, which was due to the impossibility of fulfilling this duty of reciprocity before Ionin's return. Chichkin confirmed the appointment of Bodganov, secretary of the Legation, as Russia's Chargé d'Affaires to Brazil²⁹.

Trade

Main products exported. Brazil predominantly exported coffee to Russia³⁰, thanks to the popularity of the rubiaceae on the Russian market after the St. Petersburg International Exhibition (1884), in which the future Baron of Rio Branco played a leading role³¹.

Obstacles

The tepid bilateral trade was hampered by the absence of a merchant navy in both countries, which meant that trade had to be carried out by chartering vessels from British and Dutch companies³².

In addition to the geographical distance, another difficulty was Brazil's economic dependence on the United Kingdom, which was not interested in establishing direct trade relations between Rio de Janeiro and St. Petersburg³³.

Attempts to increase trade. The beginning of Brazilian-Russian trade relations in the context of the First Republic was marked by gestures by Russian Finance Minister Ivan Vyshnegradsky to increase trade relations – with the aim of guaranteeing most-favored-nation rights for Russian exports to Brazil – and consular relations in 1891 and 1892 [Zhebit 2009, p. 14]³⁴.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ There are no consolidated statistics on the value of foreign trade between Brazil and Russia between 1889 and 1917.

³¹ Degtiareva M. Op. cit.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

 $^{^{34}}$ Разговор с Борисом Комиссаровым... С. 7–8.

In 1896, the Brazilian government established a new customs policy and denounced the agreement on customs franchises in bilateral trade with Russia, which had been signed in 1847 [Zhebit 2009, pp. 37–38].

Vyshnegradsky's efforts in the early 1890s to increase trade and consular relations between Russia and Brazil were followed by unsuccessful attempts by Sergei Vitte, the Russian Finance Minister, in 1901 to negotiate a trade agreement with Brazil [Zhebit 2009, p. 14]³⁵.

In 1909, the Brazilian Chancellor Barão do Rio Branco proposed to the Russian representative in Brazil, Piotr Maksimov, that a bilateral trade agreement and a bilateral economic cooperation agreement be signed [Zhebit 2009, p. 44].

The period between 1910 and 1916 was marked by the efforts of the Russian envoy to Brazil, Piotr Maksimov, to expand bilateral trade relations. According to Boris Komissarov, these efforts were inspired by the work of Franz Borel, the first Russian representative to independent Brazil, who tried to sign bilateral trade agreements that would establish direct trade between the two countries, eliminating intermediaries [Zhebit 2009, p. 14].

In February 1911, the Russian Council of Ministers approved a report drawn up by Maksimov highlighting the political importance of Russia's rapprochement with the countries of South America. The report proposed the following measures for deepening bilateral trade relations:

- a) the organization of direct shipping lines between the two countries:
- b) sending experts to South America in the fields of trade and industry;
- c) the establishment of new consulates [Zhebit 2009, p. 14]³⁶.

There was a significant expansion of the consular network in both countries in the first two decades of the 20th century. Brazil set up consulates in Warsaw (1914), Abo, Libava, Nikolaev and Rostov-onthe-Don, while Russia opened representations in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, in order to cater for the growing Russian immigration to Brazil [Zhebit 2009, p. 40]³⁷.

In 1916 Alexander Scherbatsky, the Russian representative in Brazil, sent correspondence to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, informing them of the need to establish direct maritime communica-

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 18 de Maio de 1913 a 3 de Maio de 1914. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1914. P. 288.

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tion between Russia and Brazil, to open branches of Russian banks and notaries for commerce in the country, to deepen assistance to Russian immigrants and to organize industrial and agricultural exhibitions in Brazil [Zhebit 2009, p. 40].

The direct shipping line issue. An attempt to establish a direct shipping line between the two countries was made in 1912, which was justified by the increase in the flow of Russian migrants to Brazil – the opening of a direct shipping line between Rio de Janeiro and Odessa was considered [Zhebit, 2009, p. 40].

Political relations

Early years (1892–1898). First of all, it should be noted that Brazil was the only Latin American country with which Russia maintained regular diplomatic relations until the beginning of the 20th century [Zhebit, 2009, pp. 68–69]. Indeed, Boris Komissarov points out that Russian contacts with Latin America were made through Rio de Janeiro, since the Russian Legation in the Brazilian capital was cumulative in neighboring countries: Argentina (1885), Uruguay (1887), Paraguay (1908) and Chile (1911)³⁸.

After the recognition of the Brazilian Republic by the Russian Empire (1892), bilateral relations went through a period of improvement, as evidenced by a statement made by Brazilian President Prudente de Morais in 1895, regarding the benefits Brazil had contracted due to "...Russia's policy of extreme caution and non-intervention". This statement referred to the fact that Saint Petersburg had not sent any of its navy ships to Rio de Janeiro during the revolts that destabilized the first years of the Republic, unlike other powers [Zhebit 2009, p. 38].

The case of the Russian ship Hera, which, on October 31, 1893, suffered damage when it was near Guanabara Bay, caused by the Brazilian cruiser Iris, inspired a Russian complaint to the Brazilian government. The damage, valued at 5,150\$000, was compensated to Russia in the two-year period 1894–1895³⁹.

³⁸ Degtiareva M. Op. cit.

³⁹ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores Carlos Augusto de Carvalho em maio de 1895. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1895. P. 107; Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores Carlos Augusto de Carvalho em 30 de abril de 1896. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1896. P. 65.

Maintenance problems at the Brazilian Legation in St. Petersburg (1897–1898). The two-year period 1897–1898 was marked by problems with the financial maintenance of the Brazilian Legation in St. Petersburg. This was due to the fact that the National Congress had not voted on a law providing a budget for the maintenance of the Legation in Russia, which led to the withdrawal of Brazilian diplomatic staff from the Russian capital⁴⁰.

As a palliative measure to prevent the interruption of Brazilian representation to the Russian government, Itamaraty appointed José Augusto Ferreira da Costa, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Holy See, as Brazil's cumulative representative in Russia⁴¹.

In 1898, Congress passed a law providing a budget for the Legation in St. Petersburg. As a result, Henrique Carlos Ribeiro Lisboa was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia, replacing Ferreira da Costa⁴².

Russian invitation to the First Hague Peace Conference (1889). In 1898, the Brazilian Legation in St. Petersburg received a circular from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated August 12, 1898, inviting the Brazilian government to take part in the First Hague Peace Conference (1899), convened under the auspices of Tsar Nicholas II⁴³.

The aim of the Conference was to "…seek ways to put an end to the progressive development of current armaments and thus ensure a general and lasting peace"⁴⁴, in a context of heightened imperialist tensions between the powers of Europe.

Brazil responded to the Russian circular in a note dated January 27, 1899, stating that it would not send representatives to the Conference, but would support the resolutions adopted by the delegates⁴⁵. The Bra-

⁴⁰ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores General de Brigada Dionisio E. de Castro Cerqueira em 12 de julho de 1898. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1898. P. 53.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores Dr. Olyntho de Magalhães em 23 de maio de 1899. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1899. P. 35–36.

⁴³ Ibid. P. 22-23.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 18 de Maio de 1913 a 3 de Maio de 1914. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1914. P. 111.

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zilian justification was that there was a significant difference in the level of development between the armaments of the great powers of Europe and the armaments that Brazil possessed, as evidenced in the *Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1899*:

The subject of the Conference is of interest to all nations, but particularly to those of Europe and there to the great powers that have most developed their armaments. Brazil's armaments are very modest and well below its needs. It [Brazil] could not therefore make the commitment not to increase them and would soon cease to be able to influence with its vote in deliberations that are certainly humanitarian, but are preferably provoked by the immediate conveniences of the politics of the Old World⁴⁶.

In addition to the argument regarding the asymmetry between the armaments of the European powers and those of Brazil, Brazil's refusal to take part in the Conference was due to the adverse macroeconomic situation that Brazil was going through at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, due to the deleterious consequences of the encilhamento policy of the early 1890s. In 1898, Brazil had signed the first *funding loan* (consolidation loan) with the creditor banks, which provided for a monetary stabilization policy characterized by severe cuts in government spending [Franco 1990, pp. 26–28]. In this way, non-participation in the 1899 Hague Conference should also be understood as an effort by the Brazilian government to contain spending.

Second Hague Peace Conference (1907). The Second Hague Peace Conference (1907), however, was marked by a convergence of positions between Brazil and Russia. The Baron of Rio Branco had instructed Rui Barbosa, the Brazilian delegate to The Hague, to support the Russian position on the stationing in neutral waters of the ships of the countries participating in the war. Russian delegate Alexander Nelidov, for his part, supported the Brazilian thesis of the sovereign equality of states. Russia was the only European country to support Brazil's position in The Hague, which is due, to a certain extent, to the weakening of the Russian position as a result of the military defeat suffered by the country in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) [Zhebit 2009, pp. 43–44].

The Brazilian-Russian convergence in The Hague made a positive impression on both countries' authorities. Russian Chancellor Ale-

⁴⁶ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores Dr. Olyntho de Magalhães em 23 de maio de 1899. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1899. P. 22–23.

xander Izvolsky said that Rio Branco "has always been sincerely and efficiently in favor of Russia". The Brazilian Chancellor, for his part, personally thanked Russia for its support for Brazil's positions at the Conference. In recognition of Brazil's constructive activity at the Conference, Baron Rio Branco was awarded the Grand Cross of the White Eagle by the Russian government [Zhebit 2009, pp. 43–44].

Arbitration Convention (1910). Mavrikiy Prosor, Russia's Minister Plenipotentiary in Rio de Janeiro, sent Russian Chancellor Izvolsky a Brazilian proposal, drawn up by the Baron of Rio Branco, regarding the conclusion of an Arbitration Convention between Brazil and Russia (Zhebit 2009, p. 44).

The Convention was signed in August 1910, ratified by both countries in 1911 and promulgated by the Brazilian government through Decree No. 9.586 on May 22, 1912⁴⁷. This Convention can be considered a result of the process of political convergence between Rio de Janeiro and St. Peterburg that began at the Second Hague Peace Conference.

Death of Piotr Maksimov (1915). Indicative of the Brazilian-Russian political rapprochement was the fact that in 1915 the death of Piotr Maksimov, Russia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Brazil since May 1910, was mentioned in the "Death of Notable Persons" section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Annual Report for 1915–1916.

The report describes the tributes paid by the Brazilian government to Maksimov: "<t>he illustrious extinct <Piotr Maksimov> was given the military honors that were his due <in Petrópolis>, and our Minister in Petrograd, according to instructions from the Brazilian Chancellery, presented wishes of condolence to the Government of Russia"⁴⁸.

World War I (1914–1918). World War I (1914–1918) was a milestone in bilateral relations. Firstly, the outbreak of the conflict led to relations being reduced to the purely diplomatic sphere, due to attacks by German submarines on merchant vessels in the Atlantic Ocean.

 $^{^{47}}$ Decreto nº 9.586, de 22 de maio de 1912. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional. URL: https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/decret/1910-1919/decreto-9586-22-maio-1912-577818-publicacaooriginal-100749-pe.html (Accessed 22 May 2024).

⁴⁸ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 1 de Julho de 1915 a 22 de Junho de 1916. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1916. P. 6.

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The German occupation of parts of Russian territory during the war brought restrictions on Brazilian diplomatic representation in Russia. In 1915, the German government's requirement regarding the *exequatur of* foreign consuls was extended to consuls established in Russian territories occupied by the German Army, which was communicated to the Brazilian government by means of the following telegram from the Brazilian Legation in Berlin, dated October 14, 1915⁴⁹:

Transmets: 188. Octobre 14. Ministre communique nos consuls Russie territoire occupé mêmes conditions France – Belgique. Sign: Teffé. Amaral, Minister. Brésil⁵⁰.

The progressive increase in tensions between Brazil and Germany, resulting from the torpedoing of Brazilian vessels by German submarines, led to closer political ties with Russia. On June 2, 1917, Brazil issued a circular note to foreign governments regarding the revocation of the country's neutrality in favor of the United States; this note was answered by the Russian government, directly to the Brazilian Legation accredited in Petrograd, on June 11 of the same year⁵¹.

The passage of the bill to revoke Brazil's neutrality, which was reported in letters to the Russian government, received praise from Russian Foreign Minister Mikhail Tereshchenko. The news of Brazil's declaration of war on Germany, however, received no Russian response, since it coincided with the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917 [Bandeira 2004, pp. 428–429].

Cultural and scientific exchange

Relations between Brazil and Russia have also been marked by occasional cultural and scientific exchange initiatives, through the exchange

⁴⁹ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 23 de Junho de 1916 a 3 de Maio de 1917. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1931. P. 115.

⁵⁰ "Transmitted: 188. October 14. – Minister communicates our consuls Russia occupied territory same conditions France – Belgium. Signed: Teffé. Amaral, Minister. Brazil" (author's translation).

⁵¹ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 1 de Maio de 1917 a 3 de Maio de 1918. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1920. P. 70.

of books between institutions in both countries and the organization of scientific expeditions.

Publications were exchanged between the National Museum of São Paulo and the Naturalist Society of Saint Petersburg and between the National Library of Rio de Janeiro and the library of the University of Moscow and the public libraries of Saint Petersburg and Odessa (Volskii 1970, p. 14].

A Russian scientific expedition to Brazil in 1914–1915 included the Russian ethnolinguist Heinrich Manizer, who carried out significant studies on the language of the Botocudo Indians [Zhebit 2009, pp. 14–15].

Although it pales in comparison to the great scientific expedition led by Baron de Langsdorff to Brazil in the 1820s, the cultural and scientific exchange between Brazil and Russia in the period between 1889 and 1917 represented the desire of both societies to deepen their knowledge of each other.

Immigration

Introduction. The period between 1889 and 1917 was marked by significant immigration of Russians and other ethnic groups from the Russian Empire (Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians and Armenians) to Brazil, motivated, among other factors, by the sociopolitical upheavals in Russia – such as the First World War and the two Revolutions of 1917 [Clissold 1970, p. 2].

First wave (1906–1917). The immigration of Russians to Brazil is divided into "waves". The first wave, which covered the period between the arrival of the first immigrants in the country (1906) and the two Russian Revolutions of 1917, was motivated by predominantly religious reasons [Zhebit 2009, pp. 196, 204].

The majority of Russians belonging to this first wave were known as *starovery* (believers in the old creed), a group that was unhappy with the liturgical reforms promoted by the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus, the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Church in Brazil was concomitant with the arrival of the first Russian immigrants [Zhebit 2009, pp. 196, 204].

As most of these immigrants were peasants – coming from all regions of the Empire and with extensive experience in growing wheat, rye, barley and sunflowers – the migratory flow headed for the rural regions of southern Brazil, where the immigrants founded the town of Campina das Missões in Rio Grande do Sul in 1909 [Zhebit 2009, pp. 196, 204].

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The beginning of the 1910s was marked by the arrival of thousands of immigrants from the Russian Empire in Brazil, especially peasants. Statistics show that 19 525 Russian immigrants had legally entered Rio Grande do Sul by 1912 [Zhebit 2009, pp. 40, 204].

Second wave (1917–1923. The second wave of Russian immigration to Brazil, which began with the 1917 Revolutions and intensified with the Russian Civil War (1917–1923), had a markedly political connotation, since a significant proportion of the immigrants were representatives of various social and professional groups who were unhappy with Bolshevism or refugees who had been displaced as a result of the conflicts in Russia [Zhebit 2009, pp. 197, 204–205].

As a considerable part of this contingent had a high level of professional training, second-wave immigration was mainly destined for large urban centers, where immigrants obtained jobs in liberal professions, such as engineers, scientists and teachers [Zhebit 2009, pp. 197, 204–205].

The revolutions in Russia (1917)

The dramatic events of 1917 (the overthrow of the tsarist regime and the two Russian Revolutions) would eventually culminate in the severing of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Bolshevik Russia.

Recognition of the Provisional Government. On April 9, 1917, Brazil recognized the Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky, formed after the deposition of Tsar Nicholas II. On that day, Brazilian Chancellor Lauro Müller sent a telegram addressed to the President of the Provisional Government of Russia in the following terms:

I am very pleased to recognize the provisional government of Russia, assuring Your Excellency that I will do my utmost to help maintain the most cordial relations of friendship with that government and the Russian people [Bandeira 2004, pp. 427–428].

Although the Brazilian government received assurances that the new Russian government had popular support [Barreto Filho 2001, pp. 44], the *Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1916–1917* showed that prior recognition by the major powers was the real motivation for the Brazilian government to recognize the Kerensky regime:

Recently, a popular revolution took place in Russia, resulting in the abdication of the Tzar and the fall of the Romanoff dynasty.

The supreme power of the nation was in fact in the hands of the National Assembly or Duma, which organized a provisional government.

Since this de facto government was immediately recognized by the Entente powers – Great Britain, France and Italy – and soon after by Japan, the United States of America and China, the Brazilian government had no hesitation in recognizing it as well – which happened on April 9th.

The Russian nation will be consulted and will have the opportunity to pronounce itself on the definitive form of government that will direct its destinies (emphasis added)⁵².

The non-recognition of the Bolshevik regime. The news of the Bolsheviks' rise to power in November 1917, replacing Kerensky's Provisional Government, went largely unnoticed by official circles in Brazil. Moniz Bandeira [Bandeira 2004, pp. 425] attributes this to communication difficulties, since the telegraphs in Petrograd were occupied by the Red Guards, and to the supposed lack of sensitivity of the Brazilian authorities to the true significance of the event.

Brazil's non-recognition was justified at the time by the instability and uncertainty that followed the Bolshevik seizure of power:

The situation in Russia is very difficult. Its Provisional Government, which had been recognized by the Great Allied Powers, Brazil and other countries, was overthrown by a popular movement. The new government that succeeded it has been going through a very difficult period, with the internal order profoundly altered and successive movements to divide the national territory.

The latest events of the war, which took place on the Russian-German border, have made this situation even more serious.

Russia, of course, is going through a very serious national and international crisis, the consequences of which, for the time being, cannot be foreseen. For this very reason, the Allied governments have refused to recognize the acts and facts arising from the current situation of the great Slavic nation⁵³.

⁵² Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 23 de Junho de 1916 a 3 de Maio de 1917. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1931. P. 99.

⁵³ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 1 de Maio de 1917 a 3 de Maio de 1918. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1920. P. 142.

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Although the Brazilian claim that political instability made it impossible to recognize the new Russian government was valid for the period immediately after the October Revolution, the persistence of non-recognition in the following years can only be justified by the opposition of segments of Brazilian society to maintaining relations with a socialist and revolutionary state like Soviet Russia and, later, the Soviet Union⁵⁴.

The Bolshevik government then sent a telegram to Russian diplomatic representations abroad, ordering the dismissal of all diplomats who refused to implement the new regime's foreign policy. As a result of this directive, Alexander Scherbatsky, Russia's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Brazil, was dismissed [Zhebit 2009, pp. 44–45].

Representation of Brazilian interests in Russia by Norway. In 1918, Gustavo Vianna Kelsch, Brazil's Chargé d'Affaires in Russia, sent an encrypted telegram suggesting the possibility of leaving the country and handing over the defense of Brazilian interests to Norway's diplomatic representation in Petrograd:

Isolated land maximalist lines [Bolsheviks] and no land maritime communications June point Most allied representatives already absent others leave point If impossible next return count on going Odessa point I also follow England to receive orders point Our interests post Norway [Bandeira 2004, pp. 431].

As a result of Vianna Kelsch's departure from the city of Petrograd in 1918 – justified by Itamaraty on the grounds of the "recent invasion of German forces in that country" – Brazilian interests in Russia began to be defended by the Legation of the Kingdom of Norway located in the Russian capital⁵⁵.

Closure of the Russian Legation in Rio de Janeiro (1920). The Russian Legation in Rio de Janeiro, commanded by elements linked to the Provisional Government that had been deposed by the Bolsheviks, depended financially on the Brazilian government's national defense

 $^{^{54}}$ On the reaction of Brazilian society to the October Revolution, see [Bandeira 2004].

⁵⁵ Relatório apresentado ao Presidente da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil pelo Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores comprehendendo o periodo decorrido de 1 de Maio de 1917 a 3 de Maio de 1918. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1920. P. 142–143.

credits, with President Nilo Peçanha agreeing to grant two loans to the Russian representation in 1918 and 1919, for a total of 45 млн <peйc> [Bandeira 2004, pp. 427].

Due to the unfeasibility of its operation, the Legation was closed in December 1920. As a result, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Brazil, Georgi Brandt, handed over eleven volumes of the Russian Legation's archives to Itamaraty [Bandeira 2004, p. 433].

Diplomatic relations between Brazil and the Soviet Union were only established almost thirty years later, in April 1945, in the context of the two countries' joint participation in the Allied camp in World War II⁵⁶.

Conclusion

An analysis of the documents and bibliography relating to relations between the First Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire (1889–1917) shows that bilateral contacts covered a surprising variety of topics, unusual for two geographically distant states that suffered from the communication difficulties that characterized diplomacy at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Contrary to the characterization made by Flávio Castro [Castro 1993, pp. 111–112], Brazilian-Russian relations in the period between 1892 and 1917 were characterized as "hibernal", due to the supposed lack of any relevant facts in bilateral interactions, the primary sources show that there were official gestures by the two governments on a series of important issues, such as the expansion of trade, the establishment of a direct maritime route between the two countries, bilateral political consultation (through the signing of the Arbitration Convention of 1910) and assistance to Russian immigrants in Brazil.

The ideological factor – in other words, the opposition between the republican and monarchist conceptions of government – did not represent a significant restriction on the course of Brazilian-Russian relations in the period. Within the dichotomy between ideology and pragmatism in the formulation of a country's foreign policy, the documentation shows that ideological considerations only had an influence on the Russian delay in recognizing the Brazilian republican government, while pragmatism prevailed in situations such as bilateral politi-

⁵⁶ For an in-depth approach to unofficial relations between Brazil and the Soviet Union in the period between 1917 and 1947, especially the relationship between the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), see [Hilton 1991].

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cal convergence at the Second Hague Peace Conference – examples of which include Russian support for the Brazilian thesis of the sovereign equality of states and Brazilian support for the Russian position on the stationing in neutral waters of ships from countries participating in the war – and attempts to establish a direct shipping line between the two countries.

The pragmatism of the bilateral relationship also manifested itself in the Russian conception of Brazil as St. Petersburg's "gateway" to Latin America, which is evidenced by the fact that the Russian Legation in Rio de Janeiro cumulatively took over Russia's diplomatic relations with other Southern Cone countries, such as Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Other factors, besides ideology, influenced relations between the young Brazilian Republic and the Russian Empire. The fact, highlighted by Komissarov⁵⁷, that the two countries were linked to different regional political and economic logics – Brazil, politically linked to the inter-American system and economically dependent on the United Kingdom and the United States; Russia, linked to the European system inherited from the Congress of Vienna (1815) – represented a restriction on deepening bilateral economic relations, as demonstrated by the failure of attempts to eliminate intermediaries in bilateral trade and to establish a direct shipping line between Rio de Janeiro and Odessa.

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Информация об авторе

Бруно Квадрос и Квадрос, магистр международных отношений, Министерство иностранных дел Бразилии, (Дворец Итамарати), Эспланададос-Министериос, Блок H, Бразилиа/DF, Бразилия, СЕР 70.170-900; bquadrosequadros@gmail.com

Information about the author

Bruno Quadros and Quadros, MA in International Relations, Brazilian Ministry of External Relations (Itamaraty), Palácio Itamaraty – Esplanada dos Ministérios – Bloco H – Brasília/DF – Brazil – CEP 70.170-900; bquadrosequadros@gmail.com