Britain and Brazil II
Political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual relations, 1808 to the present

Report on the two-day conference, 10–11 March 2016

Conference partners:
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Report on the two-day conference held on 10–11 March 2016
The Senate Room, Senate House, Malet St, London WC1E 7HU, UK

Dr Asa Cusack
Introduction

This was the second two-day conference on aspects of economic, political, social, cultural and intellectual relations between Britain and Brazil in the two centuries from the transfer of the Portuguese court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, under British protection, in 1808, during the Napoleonic Wars, and Brazil’s subsequent declaration of independence from Portugal in 1822 to the present day.

The first conference, held in May 2014 (the contributors and programme are included in Appendix A), was opened by Professor Leslie Bethell, who offered an overview of the historic relationship between Britain and Brazil. He focussed mainly on the period up to the First World War when Britain was Brazil’s principal trading partner and virtually Brazil’s only source of capital and when Britain exercised considerable political, social, cultural and intellectual influence in Brazil, not least through the British communities in Brazil and British visitors to Brazil. During the First World War and the following two decades British dominance in Brazilian trade and finance was increasingly challenged by the United States. The ‘hegemonic transition’ was completed during and immediately after the Second World War. In the second half of the 20th century Britain to a large extent turned its back on Brazil.

Since the 1990s, however, with the emergence of Brazil as an increasingly important and influential regional and global power, there have been clear signs in Britain of a revival of commercial, financial and political interest in Brazil. And in British and US universities there has been a significant growth in the study of Brazil, including the historical relationship, cultural and intellectual as well as economic and political, between Britain and Brazil.

Encouraged by the success of this conference, it was decided to hold another international conference with the aim of attracting younger scholars, including postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students, from a wider range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and from a wider range of universities in Britain, Europe, the United States and, not least, Brazil.

Organisers

•  Professor Leslie Bethell, Brazil Institute, King’s College London
•  Mr Alan Charlton, Robin Humphreys Fellow, Institute of Latin American Studies
•  Professor Linda Newson, Institute of Latin American Studies

Speakers

•  Dr Viviane Carvalho da Annunciação, University of Cambridge
•  Dr Stephen Bell, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
•  Geraldo Cantarino, Brazil Institute, King’s College London
•  Dr Teresa Cribelli, University of Alabama
•  Pedro Feitoza, University of Cambridge
•  Dr Georg Fischer, Aarhus University
•  Professor Diana Gonçalves Vidal, Universidade de São Paulo
•  Dr Robert Greenhill, London Metropolitan University
•  Dr Ana Margheritis, University of Southampton
•  Dr Thomas Mills, University of Lancaster
•  Joseph Mulhern, University of Liverpool and British Library
•  Dr Joseph Smith, University of Exeter
•  Thales Zamberlan Pereira, Universidade de São Paulo

Chairs and other participants

•  Professor Colin Lewis, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
•  Professor Anthony Pereira, Brazil Institute, King’s College London

Rapporteur

•  Dr Asa Cusack, University College London and Institute of Latin American Studies
Opening remarks
Contributors: ILAS Director Linda Newson and conference organisers Leslie Bethell and Alan Charlton

Professor Linda Newson, director of ILAS, opened the conference with thanks to the Brazilian Embassy in London and to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for their support, which was vital in enabling this second Britain and Brazil conference.

Professor Leslie Bethell explained that this second conference would look to build on the insights of its predecessor (see Appendix A), with an explicit attempt to include a wide range of voices, not least through incorporating more postgraduate and Brazil-based scholars. This also allowed for the impressive range of political, economic, social and cultural themes covered in the event’s many and varied sessions. He noted that the success of these conferences bodes well for the continued growth of academic, political and economic relations, which have been undergoing a revival since the 1990s.

Alan Charlton recalled that during his time as Ambassador to Brazil he had come across many unexpected links with Britain which had yet to be properly researched. He stressed the role of the British and Brazilian embassies in enabling this to happen, reminding participants that ‘looking from the UK across the Atlantic, Brazil is a nearby neighbour’.

Sessions One and Two: The British in Brazil
Chair: Professor Leslie Bethell, Brazil Institute, King’s College London

Speakers:
Dr Stephen Bell, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
Dr Teresa Cribelli, University of Alabama
Joseph Mulhern, University of Liverpool and British Library

Dr Bell began his paper on ‘The historical geography of British influence in southern Brazil, 1850–1950’ by discussing how southern Brazil’s underdeveloped historiography had made it difficult to conduct research in the UK, leading him to move into North American academia. Yet, there are important questions to examine, and a significant historical British presence. Not only was the first Brazilian football club formed in the region with the help of an Englishman, there was a longstanding influence of particular families such as the Lawsons, who married into Brazilian nobility and remain active in the region to this day. This influence began in Rio Grande but moved towards Porto Alegre as the 19th century unfolded, with the British community increasingly involving other European groups after World War Two, and ultimately Luso-Brazilians from the 1980s onwards.

The English language sources on southern Brazil during this period are very limited, though there are consular reports and some travel accounts, and these do shed some light on UK influence. Michael Mulhall, arriving in Rio Grande in the 1870s, found ‘English engineers everywhere you turn’, with many working in infrastructure and administration. May Frances’s account served as a kind of ethnography, describing the communities around Rio Grande and the coast, as well as the influence of Buenos Aires and the Uruguay River. And Thomas Bigg-Wither’s two-volume travel account focused on Paraná, mapping and describing the natural setting, the varied climate, and the immense areas ripe for development.

The problem in southern Brazil was where to market agricultural surpluses, if they were produced at all. In 1924 Simon Fraser saw potential for cotton and set up the Paraná Plantations company, which had a settlement the size of Yorkshire, but few British staff beyond the managers. Though the company was nationalized during World War Two, the town of Londrina remains, as does some UK influence. Dr Bell concluded by pointing out that that the world’s largest herd of Devon cattle is found in Rio Grande, recognising the potential of Brazilian and international researchers to get to the bottom of such mysteries in the future.

• In response to a question on how land for the Paraná plantations was obtained, Dr Bell noted the use of land swaps with the state, originally not on a long-term basis, and highlighted an emphasis amongst the British on security of land tenure.

• Asked about attitudes to indigenous peoples amongst the British in Brazil, he described the prevailing attitude as one of disregard, though Bigg-Wither in particular could be seen as racist: on his voyage to Brazil he began ‘creating typologies as early on as Liverpool’.

• He also revealed details about the Henry Bruman archive, comprised of an immense amount of disorganised material, much of it visual, collected by Bruman (also of UCLA) in southern Brazil between 1951 and 1952.
Dr Cribelli’s talk, entitled ‘Antonio Diodoro de Pascual’s “Ensaio critico sobre a viagem ao Brasil em 1852 de Carlos B. Mansfield”: a Brazilian rebuttal of British visions of progress in Brazil’, revisited Dr Bell’s theme of British accounts of Brazil, particularly that of English chemist Charles Mansfield in 1852. Though impressed with the country’s natural splendour, he was critical of its people, particularly about race and the need to ‘whiten’ the country. Travel narratives such as his were influential in shaping public perceptions of the New World at the time.

In 1861, however, Antonio Diodoro de Pascual, a member of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro in Rio, published a rebuttal of Mansfield’s assessment, especially that of British imperialist vision, invoking the economic potential of the nation’s vegetation and generosity to prove that development and civilization were not beyond this tropical nation.

While scholarship on the influence of British visions of progress in Brazil tends to note the popularity of Herbert Spencer’s writings on race amongst Brazilian elites, de Pascual’s rebuttal provides a compelling counter narrative and sheds greater light on Brazilian ideas of progress and civilization in the 19th century. The degree of acceptance that his ideas met with is clear when we consider that his ‘ensaio’ was even heard by the Emperor himself, and was published by a highly prestigious press. The media’s positive reception of his work showed broad appreciation for his attempt to be impartial, to accept vices but highlight virtues, and especially to turn the tables on Europe and remind it of its own failings.

- Asked about the reception of de Pascual’s account in Europe, Dr Cribelli replied that it was hard to know, but that the book was sold in the UK for three or four years. De Pascual also had letters published in French media praising Brazil.

- On whether de Pascual spoke of a Pan-Latin American identity or of a Latin America involving Brazil, she noted that he referred mainly to the ‘raza latina’, though this meant only the white population, to the exclusion of blacks, who were often slaves.

Joseph Mulhern began his presentation on ‘British enterprise, anti-slavery identity and labour in Brazil: a case study of the London and Brazilian Bank’s administration of the Angélica plantation, 1870–81’ by highlighting that British companies active in Brazil at that time were required both to respect anti-slavery legislation and to operate in a context of major industries still reliant on unfree labour. London and Brazilian – then the largest foreign bank operating in Brazil – inherited the Angélica coffee plantation (in Rio Claro, São Paulo) due to a large loan made by a subsidiary, but management of such a substantial concern ran contrary to its usual business practices. Because of its value, Angélica’s potential failure was a major threat to the bank’s balance sheet, leading them to establish a special administration mission. Administrators initially tried to recruit free labour, hoping for 10,000 European immigrants, but only 203 materialised, and the environment on site was volatile. The bank advocated for use of Chinese or Indian labour to try and solve ongoing problems, but the Foreign Office was against such proposals.

Hired slave labour was also used with authorisation from London, though the bank repeatedly stressed that it did not own slaves. It is clear from correspondence and bank records that the bank knew of Angélica’s use of slave labour and found it morally dubious, though its legality or otherwise is less clear. The bank also allowed for implication of slaves in mortgage contracts, preventing their emancipation until abolition. These practices challenge the idea of the British in Brazil as crusaders against slavery and highlight the need to consider every link in the production chain, from financing through to final product.

- Asked about media or diplomatic ripple effects in the UK, Mulhern responded that these were few and far between. The only direct refutation of statements from the bank and Angélica’s administrators was from an aggrieved local debtor, whose contemporary accounts pointed out that slaves were being employed.

- On the use of slavery for railroad construction in Bahia, he agreed that local gangs were sometimes used because of desperation for labour, but this is hard to link to UK capital because gangmasters were local.

- Pressed on the issue of legality, the speaker clarified that hiring was legal whereas ownership prior to 1843 is less clear-cut, whereas the implication of slaves in mortgage contracts might violate laws relating to transfer or dealing in slaves.
Session Three: Economic relations I – Trade

Chair: Professor Colin Lewis, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Speakers:

Thales Zamberlan Pereira, Universidade de São Paulo
Dr Robert Greenhill, London Metropolitan University

Thales Zamberlan Pereira kicked off the session with a paper on ‘The Brazilian cotton and the British trade during the early 19th century’, arguing that cotton had been neglected in the literature on trade between Britain and Brazil despite the fact that some states (such as Pernambuco and Maranhão) had a more significant surplus with Britain than with Portugal, playing an important part in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution. Partly due to quality advantages that made local variants suitable for new machinery, north-east Brazil supplied almost 40 percent of raw cotton to British factories for the last decade of the 18th century. It continued to be an important supplier until 1820, when the United States consolidated its position as the main raw cotton producer in the world.

Since most research has studied the cotton economy after 1850, long after its initial decline, the causes of earlier stagnation in production are still not well known. This is usually attributed to the impact of internal transport costs, decreasing cotton prices after 1820, labour shortages due to higher slave prices, capital shortages, and inefficient use of land. Yet new archival data allow us to contest these findings.

First, labour markets for cotton plantations in Brazil were similar to US cotton regions until 1820, having similar slave quantities at both state and plantation levels. Second, transport costs were also much lower than previously assumed and were not a major determinant of final prices. Third, it was new export taxes, related to the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Brazil, which represented the biggest increase in production costs during the first two decades of the 19th century. Ultimately, trade between north-east Brazil and Britain was beneficial to the local economy, rather than being an exploitative one-way relationship.

- Queried on the possibility of analysing productivity at total-factor level, Zamberlan Pereira suggested that this might be possible, reiterating that a difference in the US case was increasing experimentation with different ‘staples’ (fibre lengths), leading to increased productivity: this was not mirrored in Brazil. Coupled with the fixed tax brought in by the royal family, this damaged Brazilian cotton producers.

Dr Greenhill’s paper on ‘Britain and the Brazilian coffee trade, 1850–1950’ set out to examine why the coffee trade is significant to relations Britain and Brazil, whether 1913 represents a turning point (as often claimed), and who benefited from this important area of trade between Britain and Brazil.

He explained that British influence in the coffee trade was manifold. Export merchants provided intermediation services to bring coffee from Brazilian ports to the consuming centres in Europe and the United States. British businessmen invested in fixed assets to support the Brazilian coffee trade in the form of warehouses and a commodity exchange. They also bought coffee plantations from local owners and initiated value added investment in the form of coffee roasting for a wholesale and retail business. They even helped to finance successive Brazilian coffee defesas, or valorization schemes. Essentially, British firms intervened at each point in the commodity chain, from the fazenda to the end user.

These commercial links may be viewed through the prism of the creation and development of a British company, E. Johnston & Son, later Brazilian Warrant, formed in 1842 and finally sold into Brazilian ownership in 1952. This represents a rare example of corporate longevity between the two countries. Britain’s role in Brazilian coffee was not transformative, in that local ownership of plantations predominated in Brazil and American and German firms probably became more important in the trade, but neither was it trivial.

Though some argue that British traders retreated from Latin America before the outbreak of the First World War, British investment in coffee actually increased during the 1920s, placing withdrawal instead around 1945. Ultimately, both countries gained: Britain from disposing of struggling businesses, and Brazil from taking them on and making a success of them. As a testament to that fact, E. Johnston & Co survives as part of the group Marcellino Martins & E. Johnston Exportadores, which continues to trade in Brazilian coffee to this day.

- Asked why British companies were sold in the 1940s, Dr Greenhill flagged up the weak price of coffee and the closure of European markets during World War Two, but he also noted the post-war boom in European demand. The problem was often getting profits out of Brazil, with the further disincentive of high taxes in Britain. In many cases their management had also ‘ossified’, with a higher likelihood that local managers would be able to run them better.
Session Four: Economic relations II – Investment

Chair: Professor Colin Lewis, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Speakers:

Dr Georg Fischer, Aarhus University

Dr Thomas Mills, University of Lancaster

Dr Fischer began his talk on “The big money making enterprise of the world”: Barings’ Brazilian iron ore project revisited, 1911–14 by explaining that the country’s vast iron ore deposits figure prominently in the history of Brazilian economic nationalism, with the economic effects iron-ore exports contested by the Itabira Iron Ore Company and nationalist politicians. Existing scholarship on these conflicts has neglected the years prior to the First World War and created persistent myths about the origins of foreign interest in Brazil’s iron ore.

Reconstructing the networks and partnerships assembled by Barings around the Brazilian iron ore proposition reveals complex interactions between academic geologists, transport entrepreneurs, industrialists, financial institutions, and the state. This included British industrial interests represented by the Itabira Iron Ore Company, but was not limited to them. Instead, Barings orchestrated different groups and tried to harmonize different stakes to design a massive iron ore export complex involving investors from both sides of the Atlantic.

Ultimately, despite Barings’ attempts to paint this as a path to industrial take-off, the outbreak of the First World War and growing economic nationalism in Brazil thwarted their plans. Contrary to common belief, this nationalism was not a ‘lazy resistance’, but based on a reasoned understanding of the global economy. Severe tensions between different stakeholders and a mounting American-British rivalry on the ground compounded these problems and led to the ultimate failure of the venture.

• Queried on the possible role of Rothschilds, Dr Fischer underlined that Barings were aware of Brazil being seen as Rothschilds’ domain and therefore acted diplomatically, even secretively. Barings asked for a letter of commendation from Rothschilds as a way to exert pressure on the Brazilian government, but this was the extent of their involvement in this case.

Dr Mills began his paper on The electrification of the Central Brazilian railway and British interests in Latin America during World War II by explaining that throughout the Second World War the British government worked to secure the contract for the electrification of the Central Brazilian railway for Manchester-based firm Metropolitan-Vickers, yet the contract ultimately went to an American firm, the Electrical Export Corporation. Aside from its own historical interest, this case provides insights into broader issues of British economic interests in Latin America.

The significance of the project for the British government stemmed from its desire to use this case to establish with the United States a principle that wartime conditions would not be exploited by either side to gain commercial advantage over the other. This ‘self-denying ordinance’, as the Foreign Office liked to call it, was sought in order to achieve a broader protection of British export markets in Latin America.

The ultimate destination of the contract was in doubt throughout the war, but the British government’s inability to underwrite Metropolitan-Vickers’ work handed an advantage to their American competitors. Though the US accepted the ‘self-denying ordinance’ after Pearl Harbor, American diplomats allowed negotiations between Electrical Export and the Brazilian government to continue. When wartime demand for resources slackened in 1944, materials could be assigned to the project, and the American company won out. This episode represented a wider failure of the British government to secure British interests in Latin America during the Second World War and in this way is representative of the long-term decline of British influence in the region.

• Questioned on whether the Foreign Office misunderstood the region at the time, Dr Mills suggested that it did, but only in the same way that much of the business world did. There was ‘eternal optimism’ about British prospects in Brazil, part of a lack of realism about British power in general, which in reality saw a general decline post-war.

• He further explained that the British knew they could not compete with the US but that they tried nonetheless because of the symbolism, hoping that historical links would provide a sustainable basis for a strong long-term relationship.
Session Five: Brazilians in Britain

Chair: Alan Charlton, Robin Humphreys Fellow, Institute of Latin American Studies

Speaker: Dr Ana Margheritis, University of Southampton

Dr Margheritis opened her discussion of ‘Brazilians in London: diaspora engagement as an input in Brazil-UK bilateral cooperation on migration’ by noting that rapid growth of the UK’s Brazilian community in the last twenty years was unexpected and has been largely neglected in scholarship, though Brazilians now represent the largest Latin American group. Since the mid-1990s Brazil adopted diaspora engagement policies and started to address the needs and claims of these citizens. Yet, it did this via a low-visibility, technical approach led by consular offices, involving cautious attempts to organise the diaspora.

The formation of the Citizenship Councils illustrated this and exposed both possibilities and tensions in the state-diaspora relationship. The complex public-private network emerging once these initiatives entered the implementation phase required agreement and collaboration of host-state institutions and non-governmental organizations, becoming a venue for bilateral cooperation. But in London the Citizenship Council failed, riven by internal disagreements and lacking precisely such integration with wider civil society.

There has been a wider shift in modes of consular engagement towards areas such as health, education, and political rights, far beyond the traditional ‘paperwork’ approach. In education the focus has been on language and on improving access to higher education. Overall, however, there is a feeling that the most vulnerable receive the least attention. The political element has not evolved as planned, with irregular registration practices, few polling stations, and low turnout despite the vote being compulsory. There has been less success in organising for empowerment to make claims on the state, an area in which other countries have had success.

The UK has tended to see this as an immigration problem, aiming to prevent migration in the country of origin while channelling aid through the Department for International Development. For the time being, there is little chance of a change in approach from the British government.

• Asked about the profile of Brazilians in the UK, Dr Margheritis pointed out that many hold citizenship of other European countries, particularly in southern Europe, and enter the UK from there. Those in the UK are more heterogeneous than in the US, with a higher socio-economic profile, though they can be downwardly mobile after arrival. Figures are hard to establish, varying from 130,000–200,000 down to 50,000 in the census.

• On the argument that some in Brazil do not encourage reaching out to the diaspora (especially politically), she argued that it was usually framed as a human rights issue, an expansion of citizenship and democracy, which meant criticism was muted.

• Queried on differences during the presidency of Lula da Silva, she suggested that there is now less energy, less investment in the consular network, and little presidential involvement. The community abroad reacts with passivity when faced with this kind of passivity.
Session Six: Education and cultural relations
Chair: Alan Charlton, Robin Humphreys Fellow, Institute of Latin American Studies
Speakers:
Professor Diana Gonçalves Vidal, Universidade de São Paulo
Pedro Feitoza, University of Cambridge
Dr Viviane Carvalho da Annunciação, University of Cambridge

Professor Gonçalves Vidal began her paper ‘Transnational education: (dis)connections between British and Brazilian education (1920–48)’ with an account of the New Education Fellowship (NEF), an international movement emerging in 1920 and based in London that aimed to gather educators from different countries to find responses to the new demands of a changing world. Its branches spread worldwide, including to a growing number of South American nations during the 1930s.

Even though Brazil underwent several educational reforms based on New Education principles, its section emerged only in 1942, lasting until 1948. The Fellowship's reports listed D. Nina Celina, from the Ministry of Education, as secretary of Brazilian Section, led by Lourenço Filho. No further Brazilian activities in New Education were reported after 1948, although the NEF existed until 1966, when it became the World Education Fellowship. This was in part due to closer links with the International League for New Education in France, founded by Adolphe Ferrière, than to the Institute of Education in London. The influence of John Dewey from the US was also relatively strong in Brazil, to the cost of NEF.

- Asked about NEF’s influence in general, Professor Gonçalves Vidal noted that it brought educators towards a view of education as a process and a practice, not based on teachers giving lessons but on students creating their own experience.

Pedro Feitoza's talk on ‘British missions and the making of Brazilian Protestantism’ analysed contributions of Scottish Congregational missionaries and the British and Foreign Bible Society to the development of Brazilian Protestantism in the 19th-century. British Protestants introduced notions of individual salvation and religious pluralism in a Catholic society characterized by communitarianism. Protestant organisations disseminated a considerable amount of religious literature and introduced new forms of religious texts in Brazil, while also engaging in debates about religious liberty and political rights for non-Catholics within the Empire.

- Asked if Brazilian converts went on to missionary work abroad, Feitoza noted that some went to Lisbon to start their own missionary movement, but most went into rural areas in the Brazilian provinces.
- On whether there were efforts to effect behavioural change also, he clarified that a strong ascetic message was constant in Protestantism, presenting a choice between a path of ruin in bars and theatres or salvation in churches and education.
- Queried on the presence of Protestant religious courts and churches, he underlined that Anglican churches were mainly for British immigrants and lacked the usual features, such as steeples and bells. Worship was mainly domestic.

Dr Viviane Carvalho da Annunciação’s paper ‘Concrete Poetry in Brazil and Britain: public and private exchanges’ reminded the audience that ‘Concrete’ generally refers to a variety of artistic movements arising out of post-war frustration with traditional forms of art. Concrete Poetry was the product of two traditions that emerged in the fifties: one of the Bolivian-born Swiss writer, Eugene Gomringer, and the other the Brazilian Noigandres group. Together they disseminated the movement worldwide.

After first appearing in the Times Literary Supplement’s (TLS) letters section, Concrete Poetry received significant exposure via the Poor Old Tired Horse journal, edited by Ian Hamilton Finlay. This led to a return invitation for British poets to publish in the Brazilian journal Invenção. There followed a push to have Concrete Poetry published in TLS, which ultimately saw three poems appear alongside an extensive and largely positive analytical article. Two were superficially concerned with football, but
used symbols and space innovatively to create different meanings. A third, relating to Cuba, deconstructed and fragmented both socialist and anti-Cuba ideas, creating a frame of meanings that could be interpreted in numerous ways.

The personal form of distribution between Brazilian and British Concrete Poets – private exchange of letters, journals, books and artistic objects – generated major changes in the poetics of Concrete Poetry as a whole.

- On the question of the historical background to Concrete Poetry in Brazil, Dr Carvalho da Annunciação described it as a reaction to traditional poetry in tradition forms, such as sonnets of the 1930s and 1940s. This was a new poetry for a new Brazil, and one that would be verbal, vocal and visual.
Session Seven: Political relations

Chair: Professor Anthony Pereira, Brazil Institute, King’s College London

Speakers:

Dr Joseph Smith, University of Exeter

Geraldo Cantarino, Brazil Institute, King’s College London

Dr Joseph Smith’s paper “Britain rules the waves, but not in Guanabara Bay, 1893–94” focused on the limitations on British naval power and diplomatic influence illustrated during the Brazilian Naval Revolt in Guanabara Bay from September 1893 to March 1894. This conflict pitted sections of the Brazilian navy under Custódio José de Melo against various other branches of the armed forces that were loyal to President Floriano Peixoto.

At the outset of the revolt the Foreign Office instructed the British minister in Rio and the Commander of British naval forces to maintain a strict neutrality. The Law Officers of the Crown advised that Britain could not give diplomatic recognition to the rebels until an effective blockade had been established. In the meantime British merchant shipping must be allowed to conduct its business as normal. In practice, however, the inability of the British naval commander to provide adequate protection in Guanabara Bay resulted in commercial losses and prompted letters, petitions and even critical questions in the Commons. Unfavourable comparisons were made with the more pro-active attitude taken by the US Naval Commander.

There were also diplomatic constraints on British policy. Floriano Peixoto did not resign as Deodoro da Fonseca had done two years earlier. Floriano upset the complacency of the Foreign Office by spreading rumours that Britain was secretly aiding the naval rebels in order to restore the monarchy. The Foreign Office assured the Brazilian minister in London that Britain had no such design. In seeking to be legally correct, British policy became reactive and defensive. The British did ensure that both sides agreed to give 24 hours’ notice before commencing fire, in order to allow for evacuation, acceptance of which effectively robbed de Melo of one of his few advantages: surprise. Overall, the revolt revealed the basic inability of the British to master the situation despite putatively ‘ruling the waves’.

- On whether a more negative reading of Floriano could be made, Dr Smith agreed that it could, not least because he was an authoritarian who ruled by terror. Yet, he also had diplomatic skill. When US Commodore Stanton met with rebels, Floriano’s complaints led to his dismissal. The same contrast was clear in his crude use of people as human shields versus his deft spinning of British involvement as a monarchist threat.

- Queried on whether members of the British parliament sought intervention, he replied that British merchants were working with the rebels, but essentially no, as Britain had accepted the empire had fallen. Gladstone had praised the advance of democracy, and the constitution had been welcomed.

Finally, Geraldo Cantarino spoke on “The complexities of the state visit of President Geisel to London in 1976 and its implications for UK–Brazil relations”, a visit which was severely criticized in Britain because of the Brazilian state’s appalling treatment of political opponents during the dictatorship (1964–85). Alongside others involving Saudia Arabia, China, Mexico, and especially Ceausescu’s Romania, this was one of the most controversial state visits ever to occur in Britain. As a result, meetings were held at Buckingham Palace to avoid protests, not to mention the threat of assassination from far-left groups.

A visit had been on the cards since the Queen’s trip to Brazil in 1968, and Geisel was seen as a favourable candidate for a reciprocal invitation because he had not moved directly from the military into the presidency. Yet repression in Brazil continued, with journalists killed, torture, and persecution of Communists, even in the months leading up to Geisel’s arrival. Britain also saw Brazil as a large market for major infrastructure contracts, and there was a desire to maintain strong relations in defence. Geisel, meanwhile, wanted to project a positive image of Brazil abroad while showing Brazilians that his government was accepted by democratic Europe. The visit would also mean potential access to financing and technology transfer.

There was fierce opposition amongst Labour MPs in parliament, even though their party was in power. The media also took up the cause, as did the archbishop of Canterbury. Amnesty International spread information about disappearances, torture, and deaths in custody. Chambers of commerce, meanwhile, pointed to the impact on employment and the balance of payments, and Prime Minister Callaghan privately linked the visit to similar issues. Some also argued that to rebuff the Brazilians would mean less opportunity to influence their behaviour.

Ultimately, the visit was a massive success, with the signing of five commercial agreements worth over £300m in the steel, rail, finance and oil sectors. Diplomats were also able to claim that both they and the Prime Minister had raised human-rights concerns with Geisel in private. Geisel departed amidst a ‘pleasant glow’.

- Queried on repercussions from the Queen’s visit to Brazil in 1968, Cantarino replied that the visit had mainly been accepted in terms of highlighting British naval power and promoting British investment.
• Asked about the balance between human rights concerns and economic imperatives, he recounted a story from a civil servant responsible for Latin America who was threatened by Callaghan with losing his job if contracts did not result from Geisel's visit.

• On reactions in other European countries, he highlighted the strong reaction in France before Geisel moved on to Japan. More important, however, was the response in Brazil, where the visit received massive coverage and raised Geisel's profile to that of an international statesman.
Afterword

It was generally agreed that the conference was a success. The organisers were particularly impressed by the research in the UK, Brazil and elsewhere which was exploring new dimensions of British-Brazilian relations. It was clear that there is more research being conducted in the field, often by younger scholars, than is generally recognized and that this would probably justify a third conference in two years’ time.

Gilberto Freyre’s book, Ingleses no Brasil (The English in Brazil), published in 1948, explored in a sympathetic way the influence of the British on trade and industry in Brazil, especially in the early 19th century. Notwithstanding this, the historical role of the British in Brazil from the 19th century is not well known and Freyre’s book, although pioneering on the topic, is a personal account and not one that sought to be comprehensive. Over sixty years later and with the benefit of new scholarship, including the publication of Freyre’s book in English in 2011, it seems timely to take a fresh look at the topic and explore it from wider perspectives.

Convenors: Professor Leslie Bethell (Brazil Institute, King’s College London), Mr Alan Charlton (Robin Humphreys Fellows, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London), Dr Luciana Martins (Birkbeck College, University of London) and Professor Linda Newson (Institute of Latin American Studies).

Session One
Chair: Alan Charlton (Robin Humphreys Fellow, ILAS)

Britain and Brazil in the 19th and 20th centuries
Professor Leslie Bethell (Brazil Institute, King’s College London)

The English in Brazil by Gilberto Freyre: a critique
Dr Maria Lúcia Pallares (University of Cambridge)

The British and sport in Brazil
Dr Matthew Brown (University of Bristol)

Session Two
Chair: Professor Anthony Pereira (Brazil Institute, King’s College London)

British mining enterprise in Brazil
Professor Marshall Eakin (Vanderbilt University)

British investment in railways in Brazil
Professor Colin Lewis (LSE & UCL Institute for the Americas)

British business and industrialisation in Brazil
Dr Rory Miller (University of Liverpool)

Session Three
Chair: Dr Luciana Martins (Birkbeck College, University of London)

British agricultural immigrants in Brazil
Oliver Marshall (Brazil Institute, King’s College London)

British land development in north Paraná
Professor Renato Leao Rego (Universidade Estadual de Maringá)

Pioneering British naturalists in the Amazon
Dr John Hemming (Independent researcher)
Session Four

Chair: Dr Kristine Juncker (Stipendiary Fellow, ILAS)

The gendered experience of British women in Brazil
Dr Louise Guenther (National Archives, Washington).

British influence on Brazilian literature
Professor John Gledson (University of Liverpool)

A British view of Protestantism in Brazil
Dr Luciana Martins (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Closing remarks
With Professor Leslie Bethell and Mr Alan Charlton
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