

omy became more centralized in the industrial states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The Great Recession marked the start of industrialization in all states of the federation.

In 1930, a revolution brought Dr. Getulio Vargas to power. He established a centralized Constitution and remained in power until 1945. A new Constitution restored democracy in 1946, permitting development of the economy, which was characterized by the growth of Brazil's manufacturing sector.

In 1964, a coup d'état brought the military to power for 21 years. During this period income distribution and wealth became increasingly unbalanced, accentuating regional disparities.

In 1982, the military allowed free gubernatorial elections which gave a majority to the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies. Due to strong support and as a result of legislation introduced by the military, the electoral college was able to choose the principal leader of the opposition, Tancredo Neves, as civilian President on January 15, 1985. He died before assuming power and was replaced by Vice President José Sarney.

## Constitution

Brazil is a Federal Republic composed of 24 states, two territories and a federal district, Brasilia, the capital of the Union.

Under the Constitution, an elected president assumes the *executive power* with a cabinet of ministers which can issue decrees. Laws are promulgated by a bicameral legislative branch composed of a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. Laws and presidential decrees are enforced by five major sectorial tribunals, all dominated by the Supreme Federal Tribunal which controls, under the Constitution, the *judicial power* for the Union.

## Population and Principal Cities

With 140 million inhabitants, of which one in every two is under 25 years old, Brazil has roughly half the entire South American population with an average density of 16 persons per square kilometre. The population is mostly concentrated along the coast where the original settlements were made and in the island pockets created by the industrial states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The two major metropolitan