

## OTHER NATIONS

Israel's Arab minority, has the largest natural constituency of the three blocs and five seats in the 120-member Knesset. It follows Moscow's lead in interpreting and fighting for the "legitimate rights of Palestinians" and the repatriation of Arab refugees.

Traditional Zionism, Schnall notes, demands that radical dissent be voluntarily suppressed in the face of continual military, economic, and diplomatic pressures. But as both the defeat of the Labor Party in the May 1977 elections and the challenge from the fringes suggest, a political consensus in Israel is still far away.

### *A State of Disunity*

"The Balkanization of Nigeria's Federal System" by John R. Rogge, in *Journal of Geography* (Apr.-May 1977), Department of Geography, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill. 61455.

For many young African nations, a federal system of government seemed an ideal solution to the intense regional rivalry among diverse tribal and ethnic groups under their jurisdiction. The experience of Nigeria, however, where the number of states has grown from 3 at independence (black lines on map) to 19 today



(red) demonstrates that a federal structure is no stronger than the sense of "nation" that underlies it. Indeed, writes Rogge, a geographer at the University of Manitoba, the country's short but turbulent history—including attempted secession by the Ibo state of Biafra in 1967—is a case study of the inadequacy of federalism when it is forced to carry too great a burden.

Before Nigeria achieved independence in 1960—even before it came under British control after the Berlin Conference of 1885—continual conflict existed among the three dominant tribes (the Hausa-Fulani of the north, the Ibo of the east, the Yoruba of the west), as well as among countless smaller ones. Attempts to remedy the situation by increasing the number of states, Rogge contends, merely added to the friction by heightening tribal competition.

Symbolic of this internecine rivalry are the hot disputes over the national census whenever it is issued. The census is used to apportion political power and oil revenues among the states, and charges of over- and under-counting various groups helped topple the regime of General Yakubu Gowon in 1975. In all, the internal map of Nigeria has been redrawn three times since 1960. It is estimated that, if representation of all ethnic communities were achieved, some 200 states would be necessary. In Nigeria, says Rogge, "it remains highly questionable whether a desire for union ever overrode the preoccupations with regional self-interests."