Rhodesia Beats the Rap

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When on November 11, 1965, the Rhodesian government of Prime Minister Ian Smith broke away from Great Britain, its Unilateral Declaration of Independence was roundly denounced by just about everyone. At the urging of the British, the United Nations passed two resolutions: a routine condemnation of UDI, and a demand that all states break off economic relations with the "illegal régime" to bring Rhodesia to its knees. World opinion and the New York *Times* were very pleased with all this and everyone kept telling each other that the Smith government was doomed. As it turned out, things weren't that simple.

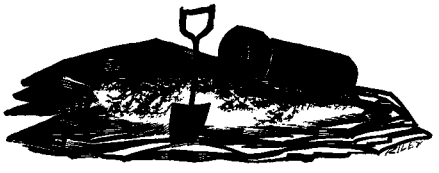
A blockaded country has two obvious worries: imports and exports. Of the first, oil is the most important to Rhodesia. The country has almost none at all, and the sanctionists at the United Nations assumed that its economy would die of thirst. Thanks to the co-operativeness of the Portuguese and South African governments and the incuriosity of several others, such has been far from the case.

Crude oil from the Middle East is sold to refineries in Durban and the Mozambiquan port of Lourenço Marques, which although externally owned are controlled by local directors. The refineries convert it to usable oil and gasoline and sell it to private dealers, who then transport it to Rhodesia, where it is bought by the government purchasing agent and resold to neighborhood retailers.

It is estimated that four hundred railway cars of oil per month are shipped westward to Rhodesia on the line from the Mozambiquan port of Beira. The fact that the railroad runs through Malawi (the first black African state to have diplomatic relations with South Africa and Portugal) seems to present no problems.

Actually, hardly anybody has problems. Japan's exports to Rhodesia for the first quarter of 1967 were up thirty-eight per cent over those of 1966, Holland's forty-nine per cent, West Germany's sixty-four per cent. The Bonn government announced it would—in harmony with world opinion—impose sanctions, but with the proviso that "long-term contracts" would be honored. (Farsighted negotiation quickly became the vogue.) Yugoslavia has increased its Rhodesian trade for the same period by sixty-nine per cent (if Tito practiced what he preaches, he would have gone broke years ago); France's trade has risen a whopping two hundred per cent (one in the eye for *les Anglais*!); and Portugal enjoys a comfortable 350 per cent increase. And the British? Rhodesian Deputy Prime Minister John Wrathall has estimated that for the first seven months of 1967, British exports to Rhodesia totaled over $16 million—twice the amount for the whole of 1966. The British dispute the percentages but not the trade.

As for exports, Rhodesia has six basic ones: tobacco, sugar, asbestos, copper, chrome, and iron. (It also mines the rare mineral lithium—a commodity badly needed by the U.S. space program, which gets enough and no questions asked how, if you please.) Rhodesia is selling just about all its asbestos and copper, half its iron ore, and one-third of the chrome and tobacco. Only



with ubiquitous sugar does it seem to be doing poorly. But though Rhodesia exported approximately $300 million worth of goods in 1967, its customers will admit to receiving only some $150 million.

What is happening to the remainder is a story out of the pages of Ian Fleming. When twenty thousand tons of chrome ore arrived in Japan from South Africa last August, the British government lodged a protest (its twenty-seventh in six months over "Rhodesian" exports) and followed it up with a little metallurgical James Bonding. Their agents got hold of an analysis of the ore that stated it was unlike any ever found in South Africa and instead was remarkably characteristic of Rhodesian chrome. The Japanese Foreign Office passed the protest on to their Ministry of International Trade and Industry, which promptly informed the British that since the chrome had South African certificates of origin, it must have come from South Africa.

Of all the Rhodesian exports, the disposal of copper provides the best example of how sanctions are undercut. Before November, 1965, nearly all Rhodesian copper—eighteen thousand tons a year—was handled by the British-based firm of MTD Copper Sales, Ltd. A few months before the sanctions, the company completely reorganized, appointing a West German agent in Johannesburg and signing "long-term" contracts with European refineries in Wilhelmsburg (Germany) and Hoboken (Belgium).

The copper in question is refined in Rhodesia, exported to Mozambique and thence to Antwerp and Hamburg, from where it is sent to the plants in Wilhelmsburg and Hoboken and *re*-refined. After all that, who is to say where it comes from? This method of doing business was worth some $11 million in 1966.

Sub-Zambezi Africa is more and more a land of curious coincidences. The nations and territories of southern Africa are growing close economically (though not politically); indeed, a sort of common market is in the offing. The Black African mini-states of the area recognize (as do the whites) the economic necessity of getting along with their neighbors. In Salisbury, Smith is firmly in control, having thwarted the extremes of the instant universal democracy theoreticians and the pro-apartheid segment in his own Rhodesian Front party. The gross national product, which declined slightly in 1966 and then rose by 3.4 per cent in 1967, is expected to go up another four or five per cent in 1968. After Britain devalued the pound, Smith not only affirmed Rhodesia's economic strength in maintaining the value of its money but even offered Britain "a helping hand in her present difficulty."

By the Brandy Still

IVO ANDRIC

MORE THAN eleven years had passed since that afternoon in Rome when Fra Marko, a student of divinity from Bosnia, was led out with other students for a walk on the Via Nomentana. They were to be shown the catacombs of St. Agnes. It was an afternoon in the feverish and sultry Roman spring, full of dust, the scent of pines, and stark light. Fruit trees were in bloom, and Fra Marko yearned more than ever for his native Bosnia and for his own people.

One entered the catacombs through the church itself, which was moldy and poor. The lay brother who acted as their guide was sullen, for he could expect no tips. The catacombs were much smaller and more run down than the great catacombs of St. Callisto on the Via Appia. Yet they too held cleverly arranged surprises that fascinated the visitor. In one of the empty tombs there burned, above some crossed bones, a tiny antique lamp of red clay that threw a clear light on a golden medallion the size of a ducat. On the medallion was the head of a young man, with his name engraved underneath, and all around the head, like an aureole, was written in clear, graven letters: *Semper in pace gaudet* ("He rejoices in eternal peace"). Fra Marko tarried by the grave so long that the guide had to call after him, and even scold him.

He never forgot that face in the catacombs. Returning to the city that afternoon and watching the pale lights flicker on in the houses and *trattorias*, ushering in a night life that was unknown to him, he shivered at the thought that those people were unaware of the small underground light and that very probably this same evening they would lose forever the joyous, the only true life of eternity. For several days afterwards he could not eat, he slept badly, his fellow monks struck him as malingerers and slackers, the world at large as abandoned to itself and to all manner of temptations. He even forgot his beloved Bosnia. Later he calmed down somewhat, but there remained within in him a powerful longing—one destined never to leave him again—for all men to realize and feel the disparity between the shortness of life and the eternity of death, as he himself had felt it before the illuminated face of the young man in the catacombs.

Before long, Fra Marko was sent back to Bosnia. Years came and went. Thanks partly to a life filled with hard work and partly to disappointments that came thick and fast, which were bound to mellow even as headstrong a nature as his, Fra Marko's zeal grew, if not tepid, at least less noticeable. In his mind he saw clearly, just as he had on that afternoon on the Via Nomentana, two kinds of life and light—one great and everlasting, and the other small and fleeting; even today, he could still relive that sense of horror at the thought of millions of people who were losing the only real and true life for the sake of this brief and puny one with its wretched delights and possessions. Even now, he still almost choked with the urge to call out to people, to help, to save. Often enough these days as he cast a glance through the window of his cell and saw the fields and the roofs of houses bathed in moonlight under the early frost, there would appear to him, in the place of quiet fields, the whole of God's earth in her breadth and length, her face covered by a rash of towns that were like spots of fire and brands of the Devil. He had seen only Rome, Ancona, and his own Travnik in Bosnia, but he knew well that the earth was full of such towns and his mind's eye seemed to encompass them all at once, to the most distant ones whose names he didn't know. In all of them alike, souls were bent on damnation and men on ruin.

Standing by the window and reluctant to light the candles as yet, Fra Marko lost sight of the darkened hamlets and fields of Kreševo and let his eyes wander instead over the great cities of the world with their streets, gardens, and houses, containing all that the Devil had built as a snare to the vanity, greed, and corruption of men. He compared his own strength with the strength that would be needed to wipe it all from the face of God's earth, from Travnik and Sarajevo to that nameless town that glowed and winked somewhere at the bottom of Europe or of loathsome Asia, where the Devil felt at home. It was a moment in which Fra Marko's yearning to save mankind swelled past all bounds and threatened his peace of mind, when this vicar of Kreševo, forgetting who