

The fact is that the white Government faces a determined and militant black population more than twenty times as large as the total white population.

Philip Knightley calls his history of war correspondents 'The First Casualty' — the first casualty being Truth.

Rhodesia is at war and truth is hard to recognise for propaganda is paraded in persuasive guise by both sides. Recently, the Government has made much play of a programme by the Army to "win hearts and minds."

One morning this month twenty of my employees on the ranch were standing around a tall, uneducated cattle herder and all were looking shocked. I found that Dickson had just received word from his home eighty miles away that "the soldiers" had burned his four huts and all their contents. "Who was at home?" I asked.

"Only my two wives and six children were at home." There is no appeal; nothing can be done except to give what help one can. No hearts or minds were won by this news.

Earlier this month I spoke to a friend who has a University education and he told me that his brother had been executed the day before. He was on his way to take the news to his widowed mother. A year ago his brother had left his sixth form studies to train as a guerilla. He had re-entered Rhodesia and in an engagement lost his left arm and his right leg and had been captured, hospitalised, tried and condemned to death for "being in possession of arms of war." There had been an appeal but now came the news of the execution. We execute our prisoners of war — and win no hearts or minds.

Last week I had news of another friend. He is an exemplary man, the head teacher of a school, married to a teacher, has two children and has saved a large sum of money which he has in a business — in other words a

typical "Black Marxist." He has just left Rhodesia, his wife, his family, his business, to train as a guerilla. "I will see you again in a free Zimbabwe."

What have we learned in this six months?

Mr Smith has shown the whole world that he has no intention of transferring power from whites to the whole population, including whites.

The Nationalists, though divided in their leadership represent the people united in their determination to free themselves from white domination, no matter what the cost in blood.

Britain and America made a mistake in putting the interim period of government up for negotiation. Britain should have nominated a caretaker government so that the politicians would have been free to concern themselves with two main matters, the framing of an independence Constitution and all the political preparations required for an election based on a universal franchise. Democracy cannot begin in the new Zimbabwe until there is security for an election and freedom for all to participate. Any referendum conducted under the Smith Government's aegis and during the state of emergency is doomed to fail.

Leadership can only be decided at a general election, and at that election the Opposition will also be determined — an equally important matter.

If the free world, with all its influence and power, cannot provide a catalyst to make possible the unification of black and white then a war of attrition will depose the white men in dishonour. That is a matter for the white man's choice and is his concern. The future could belong to us all; today only the Black man can be sure of the future —and he is sure. •

MORE THAN BUILDINGS LIE IN RUIN

Letter from a 17 year old schoolboy in Guguletu black township addressed to a white Liberal

Dear Dart

We are still fine at this riot stricken township.

Sophia has always been worried since the unrest started. Sometimes she wants to cry warning me and Archie not to walk in the streets at night. She does not want to see us with our girl friends. She is also afraid thinking that we can be detained at any time and be killed. Sometimes she tells me that she does not sleep, but thinking.

Dart, as far as I can recall back from my mind is when I was five years old. At that time we were living at..... in a one roomed house made of zinc. When we came in there Sophia told us that that was our home. We had nothing with us except blankets to sleep on a wooded floor. I remember one morning Sophia cutting bread with

her hand for me and Archie, what thick, shapeless slices we had. One day while we were playing Sophia called. When we stepped in the house we saw a white lady to whom we were introduced. This lady left us, she was driving a red beetle Volkswagen. Sophia told us that was Dart. From that day I did not forget that name.

Dart came back again now with a small basket in which there were few cups, a knife and a towel. From that day we used to look at the northerly direction for Dart. If we saw a red Volkswagen, we used to run home to tell mother that Dart was coming. It did not end there. Dart brought us a sofa to sleep on. All three of us slept there like sardines packed in a tin with our head in opposite directions. Again the non-tiring lone fighter brought us a

bench and a cupboard. Now the 'home' was a complete home. Dart, there are hundreds and hundreds of things I do not know. You, daddy Henry and Sophia know.

Recently I visited you accompanied by my friend Albert. For Albert in his life you were the first white people to make him feel that he was a human being. I must tell you he will never forget you in his life. On our way back your name and attitude towards us was always in his lips, so much that he told me not to leave him behind when I go to you again. I am sure you were disappointed when we declined sleeping there, but at our homes they did not know where we were. Now came the moment when I was leaving.. Daddy Henry shook my hand with a smile, but that was not a happy smile, it was a smile of a sad person. I looked over him at Sally, the same was written on her face. At Mummy Dart it was the same. I do not know whether it was me who reflected those feelings or what. I could not stand that I had to look down. On the

way tears were spilling down my cheeks. I was thinking of good people.

It is a long time since these Afrikaaners have oppressed us. I lost my father because of them. To them we are worse than dogs. I am afraid good people like you, Alan Patons who has been warning them for a long time, Helen Suzmans, Eglins and many others are going to suffer because of them. Black man hates White man because White man has taught him to hate. The world kills good people, where are Kennedys, Luthulis and Martin Luther Kings? Daddy Henry, Mummy Dart, James and Sally, I hate the one who hates me. Praise and, thanks to your family. As it is said by Alan Paton, they killed the Liberal Party in 1968 which was composed of all races. I am sure it could have saved South Africa, but now it is very late, there is no looking back.

Your loving son
Simon.

(Names have been disguised for obvious reasons) •

live tunes:

cold steel:

Ophir amuse:

wit florist

By Tony Voss.

Bateleur Poets:— Bateleur Press — Johannesburg. 1977

The Bateleur Poets series brings together between one pair of covers 'four separate books pressed into one volume only through considerations of economy" (Lionel Abrahams in the publisher's foreword to this volume). The series began well in 1975 with Abrahams himself, Robert Greig, Mike Kirkwood and Walter Saunders. This second volume is as good as the first, and, to my mind, more interesting. It seems only fair to discuss the volume as if we had four separate books, as Peter Strauss did when he reviewed the first Bateleur Poets in Reality last year.

Don MacLennan

A typical Don MacLennan poem, if there is such a thing, begins on a note of conversation, or observation, or self-questioning, moves through complexity and out again, into an earned simplicity and melody. I would like to quote many of the longer poems here, but will settle for the first poem of Life Songs:

Love Song

Not what you've done that counts
but how you keep reminding people
of yourself.
And here I am again
eating vain hope
beginning to unlearn pain
and claim priority on just one grip
that holds you to my ribs again.

The rhyme sings at the end of that poem, and the poet's ear is always good and true. This is the end of a longer poem called 'Conversation':

A point I have to raise —
love and literature occur
just when you need to love or clarify or praise.