

**HOLY WARRIORS, DEVIANTS AND OTHER FANATICS
A PRELUDE TO DOING RESEARCH IN A NATIONAL SECURITY
CONSCIOUS STATE**

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What is the Anthropology of Power?

This is what I asked myself when I received an invitation to present a paper on this topic at the Fourth Annual Conference of UGAT. A quick trip to the main library of the University of Malaya produced a book appropriately titled *The Anthropology of Power* (Fogelson and Adams, 1977) which informed me that "The term 'power' . . . is possibly the major contender to replace that declining veteran, 'development,' as the Westerner's favorite intellectual catch-all." I went on to read that while the term "power" reflects a profound concern of the times, "yet the meaning of the term is imprecise and unclear."

On the same library shelf that day I picked up a fascinating book titled *Ethics and Anthropology* (Rynkiewich and Spradley, 1976). It examined the ethical dimensions of anthropology at the grass roots level, and the ethical dilemmas involved in field work, more especially in the Third World.

That very morning I exchanged pleasantries with Associate Professor Dr. Syed Husin Ali of the University of Malaya's Department of Anthropology and Sociology. He had just three months earlier been released after six years of detention under Malaysia's draconian Internal Security Act which allows for detention without trial for persons deemed as "security threats." Upon his release from detention, which included six months in solitary confinement, Dr. Syed Husin Ali had said:

I don't consider I have done anything wrong. I've just talked about poverty and social injustices. My views have been based on my research . . . I'm just voicing dissenting views. In a democracy you have to allow that.¹ (quoted in *Asiaweek*, October 17, 1980: 17).

The conjunction of these three events shaped this paper. I remembered that Bishop Francisco Claver, S.J. had said in his keynote address to the Second National Convention of UGAT in Baguio City in 1979 that:

The context of any anthropologizing today in the Philippines is, simply, *the Philippines today!* And this means martial law and our present system of laws (or non-laws), the whole paraphernalia of our peculiar system of government . . .

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Msgr. Claver had warned the anthropologist to understand holistically the social, economic and political environment within which his case-study community and he himself lived, because this environment was basic to the experiences of his host community. He called for no less than the total understanding of the national setting by the researcher because:

When we talk of the problem, the setting, the challenges and responses, Philippine Anthropology itself, it means involvement with our people, with their thoughts, their life, not just as objects of study . . . but as persons to help and cherish, to live with and work with, with all the tools and expertise that our discipline can offer.

This article is an attempt to understand the Malaysian national setting in which social science research must currently take place. This is, indeed, a study of the power configurations which with ever mounting pressure dictate the theories, methodologies, even study areas, and the probabilities of getting one's research published. This is the first stage in the study of power which the anthropologist, or for that matter any social scientist, must undertake before he can even think of doing "normal" research.

Malaysia, the Not-Quite-Utopia

1980 was a good year for Malaysia in the international media. The London-based *Economist* (December 22, 1979) in a special feature survey declared that Malaysians are "well fed, well amused, well defended," that "new money is not crammed into the pockets of a few millionaires," there are no "swelling slums of giant cities," that "Malaysia offers its citizens a standard of liberty not far removed from that of Japan and Australia" and that this "not-quite-Utopia" is almost paradise compared to neighboring countries.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (August 22, 1980) stated, too, that with the wealth of natural resources available, and the range of human resources at hand "there is good reason for Malaysians believing in a moderate Utopia by 1990."

The Other Side of Utopia

"The Utopian way of life," wrote St. Sir Thomas More in his classic *Utopia*, "provides not only the happiest basis for a civilized community, but also one which, in all human probability, will last for ever."

Alas, however, even More's *Utopia* had its darker side. The incurably ill were subjected to euthanasia; pre-marital intercourse was severely punished with permanent disqualification from marriage; the normal penalty for major crimes was slavery; and recalcitrant convicts were just "slaughtered like wild beasts."

It is this sobering realization that even as famous a Utopia as More's can have distressingly dystopian and totalitarian features which has

prompted me to seek to analyze and interpret some of the major events in Malaysia over this past year which, I believe, raise serious issues in the social scientist about to launch into studying the not-quite-but-soon-about-to-be-moderate Malaysian Utopia.

Peasant Unrest in Kedah

The Muda Region in Northwest Peninsular Malaysia is the nation's major rice supplier. Nearly 700,000 persons live in the region which, with 25% of the nation's planted rice land, contributes 45% of the annual national requirement. In recent years, the Muda Region has become a showpiece of Malaysia's Green Revolution, and in the past decade, millions of dollars have been poured into the region to construct a vast irrigation network which has allowed the introduction of double cropping and the harvesting of high-yielding short-term rice varieties.

It was, therefore, with considerable shock and dismay that officials at the state and national levels greeted the demonstration by 15,000 padi planters in Alor Star, Kedah, the regional capital of the Muda region, on January 24, 1980, who were demanding an increase in the padi price. Government reaction to the at times violent demonstration, the first such mass rural Malay protest in years is instructive.

The Kedah Chief Minister immediately denied that the farmers were demonstrating to press for higher padi prices. Instead, he claimed: "The whole thing was instigated by irresponsible elements with an ulterior motive. The demonstrators planned to kidnap me and hold me hostage until the government bowed to their demands" (*The Star*, January 25, 1980). What these demands were he didn't say.

Kedah-born Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad also denied that the padi subsidy was the cause of the demonstration because, he reasoned,

As a doctor I had the opportunity to be with the padi farmers in Kedah and I know they are actually better off than the other padi farmers (*Sunday Star*, January 27, 1980).

Numerous "theories" were then floated by officialdom seeking to blame, among others "a *dakwah* (Muslim missionary) group, communist sympathizers, even a group . . . whose trade mark is a leaflet that introduces "Ayatollah Khomeini of Malaysia" . . . (and) . . . the work of a small group of university students (*Asiaweek*, February 8, 1980).

It was to be months later that government would publicly, and quietly, admit that the demonstration was in fact over the padi subsidy, but in the meantime, the main Malay national opposition party, the Parti Islam (PAS), was to be publicly blamed for the affair when some of its

members were detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for their alleged involvement in the demonstration.

Suffice it to say, that a relatively straightforward issue over padi prices was interpreted by government as a sinister plot to disenchant the Malay farmer. This all too ready tendency to read into events the work of various "anti-national" elements out to threaten national security is, as we shall see, a distressingly regular feature in the Malaysian political scene.

Holy Warriors: The Strange Tale of P.A.S. and PAS

PAS advocates the establishment of an Islamic state in Malaysia. It is the main Malay opposition to the ruling United Malay National Organization (UMNO). Although not a threat nationally to UMNO, at the local, and regional levels, PAS-UMNO political rivalry is colorful and intense (Funston, 1980). Kedah is the present focus of PAS political rivalry with UMNO for the allegiance of Malay peasantry.

In March 1980, government (UMNO) spokesmen publicly associated PAS with P.A.S. — the Pertubohan Angkatan Sabilullah (Organization of the Forces of the Righteous Path) — which was alleged to be the underground organization behind the January demonstration in Alor Star. It was alleged to subscribe to a policy of racialism and religious fundamentalism which would only generate fear, suspicion and hatred among Malaysia's different races, leading to internal strife and bloodshed (*The Star*, March 19, 1980). PAS officials and members were claimed to comprise the membership of P.A.S.

The full preventive detention might of the ISA was applied against P.A.S. members, publicly described as "Holy Warriors" in the national media, and despite PAS denials to the contrary full opportunity was taken to accuse the party of being involved in an illegal movement to "create terror and fear among the people," a tactic which was described as similar to that of the communists (*New Straits Times*, March 20, 1980). This was said to prove that PAS did not accept the democratic system, or the principles of tolerance (*The Star*, May 5, 1980).

Juramentado Malaysian style

Eight men among a group of 17 to 20 men dressed in white and wielding swords (wrapped partly in white cloth bearing the inscription "Lailahailallah Muhammadar Rassulab") were killed after they stormed the district police station (Batu Pahat, Johore). The Inspector-General of Police . . . described them as "religious fanatics." Seven of the dead men are believed to be local people and one a Kampuchean refugee (*New Straits Times*, October 17, 1980)

On October 16, 1980 two Kampuchean Muslim refugees now residing in Malaysia, one proclaiming himself the Imam Mahdi al-Muntar (the

awaited Messiah who Muslims believe will emerge before the Last Judgement), and the other Nabi Isa Alaihissalam (Jesus Christ) led 20 of their Malay followers in a suicidal attack on the Batu Pahat police station shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great). They indiscriminantly attacked station personnel most of whom were also Muslims.

Just a week before, the group had been ordered by the local Kadhi (Muslim religious authority) to abandon his "deviationist teachings" and disband the group. The group retreated to a hilltop hideout, worked themselves into a trance by chanting zikir (verses from the Holy Koran), and then launched their attack, in which both Imam Mahdi and Nabi Isa died in the ensuing sword vs. gun battle.

Malaysian politicians were at a public loss to explain the Batu Pahat incident. The Johore Chief Minister described them as "worse than communist terrorists" (*The Sunday Star*, October 19, 1980), then claimed that the communists masterminded the attack (*New Sunday Times*, October 26, 1980). Others branded them "wild and savage," and "religious fanatics," and the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini were alleged to have inspired them (*The Star*, October 20, 1980). They were branded by the Minister of Home Affairs (the administrator of the dreaded ISA) as "terrorists" who were a "threat to the security of the country" (*New Straits Times*, October 21, 1980).

The Batu Pahat incident has led to the comprehensive study by government of Islamic "deviationist" teaching in the country because, in the words of the Minister of Finance Tunku Razaleigh, "It must be stressed that such teachings will lead to disunity among kampong (village) residents and pose a danger to peace and stability" (*The Star*, October 27, 1980).

Denunciations of "fanatics" and "deviants" do little to help explain the attack. It is interesting to note that one attempt to draw parallels between the Batu Pahat incident and the Southern Philippine Muslim tradition of *juramentado* was refused media coverage on grounds that this was a "very sensitive issue." The fact remains, however, that Prang Sabilullah (Fighting in the way of Allah) and the Jihad (War in defense of Islam) have the force of divine prescription in the Holy Koran (see, for example, Suras 3: 163 and 4: 76). Ordinarily such "attacks" are directed against threatening non-believers, the Islamic revival in Malaysia has been characterized by charges made by fundamentalist Muslims that "modern" Malays ("western educated" politicians, technocrats, professionals) are *munafik* (hypocrites) against whom the Holy Koran had warned:

When they lookest at them, their exteriors please thee; and when they speak, thou listenest to their words. They are as (worthless as hollow) pieces of timber propped up, (unable to stand on their own). They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemies; so beware of them. The curse of Allah be on them (Sura 53: 4).

If this argument is accepted, then efforts taken by groups of individual Muslims to bring about a return to the fundamentals of their faith, and to reject the secularization of Islam (see, for example, Al-Attas, 1978) on the grounds that Islam is a *din* (a total plan for human conduct, and not just a religion), should be likened to a reformation movement within Islam.

The Batu Pahat group, when threatened by "munafiks" with disbandment, preferred to follow the dictates of the Holy Koran (which promised eternal rewards for those dying in the defense of the faith) and gave up their lives in what they believed to be the defense of the "true" version of Islam.

This stance would suggest that a plea for religious tolerance is in order, tolerance to interpret the Holy Koran in the way the individual best sees fit. This "right" to interpret Holy Scriptures to the best dictates of one's conscience is, of course, an accepted "right" in Christianity today. The Malaysian government, on the other hand, has seen it fit, for reasons analyzed below) to brand such movements seeking to bring about a religious renewal as fanatical, deviationist, religious subversion and above all, prejudicial to national security.

Muslim Deviants and Fanatics

Over the past year, government sources have reported the proliferation of "deviationist" dakwah (missionary) movements throughout Malaysia. Groups have been reported holding zikir sessions during which participants claim to have visions of God and heaven (*New Straits Times*, October 24, 1980). Others are said to be influenced by Hinduism, vegetarianism, preaching sexual promiscuity, and one is alleged to even not believe in prayer (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 31, 1980). Yet others are reported warning Muslims that animals slaughtered by UMNO supporters is "contaminated" and hence *haram* (forbidden) to "true" Muslims (*The Star*, September 15, 1980).

Government has begun investigating various Islamic groups for deviationist teaching, this being defined as teachings not in accordance to the officially sanctioned interpretation of the Holy Koran. Fears have been expressed that "deviationist" teachings are infiltrating the armed forces (*New Straits Times*, December 16, 1980), and plans have been announced to give would-be Muslim missionaries a thorough screening of their educational background, political and other affiliations to weed out religious "opportunists" and "deviants" (*New Straits Times*, November 24, 1980).

It has even been announced in one state that anyone following deviationist teachings would be brought before the Shariah Court (Muslim

court), and that if found guilty would no longer be considered Muslim. Since being Muslim is a constitutional prerequisite to being classified as "Malay," a group which is accorded by the Malaysian Constitution special privileges, this announcement threatens to withdraw these privileges from those not toing the "official" line (*Malay Mail*, November 19, 1980).

Muslims have been warned against "disruptive elements" using Islam as a tool to destroy national unity; to belittle government by claiming that Islam is a socialistic religion. A striking feature of this carefully orchestrated campaign directed against critics of the "official" interpretation of the Holy Koran, was the development towards the end of 1980 of the increasing tendency to associate "deviancy" with threats to national security. It has been announced that "false" Islamic missionary activity is now considered Public Enemy No. 3 after dadah (drug) abuse and communism (*New Straits Times*, November 28, 1980), and "deviants" have been warned that the ISA will be used against them (*New Straits Times*, March 29, 1981). Further, the government has discerned that "besides the communists, socialists were also trying to preach their ideologies under the guise of spreading Islam" (*New Straits Times*, May 29, 1980). And the Communist Party of Malaya is alleged to have set up a clandestine organization known as the Persatuan Persaudaraan Islam (Islamic Friendship Association), and that such "deviant" teachings had become part of the subversive scheme of the Communist Party of Malaya" (*New Straits Times*, December 2, 1980).

The pattern is distressingly obvious. When warnings against "deviationist" teachings, and governmental inquiries and commissions have (apparently) failed to stop the proliferation of independent Koran-study groups, government spokesmen have increasingly taken to issuing threats, bannings, denunciations as "socialistic" and "communistic," and equating them with subversion and plots to overthrow the legally constituted government. Arrest and detention under the ISA is now being threatened.

"Cults, secret societies and the Holy War . . . have a long history in Malaysia" writes Stockwell (1979: 161). He noted that in times of crisis, the Malay village solidarity is expressed this way. His study of Malay politics during the ill-fated Malayan Union experiment in the late 1940's shows how UMNO used the various cult movements to spread its influence at the village level. It is indeed ironical that today, three decades later, that same party finds itself, as the British did, cracking down on what in those days UMNO hailed as an expression of Malay nationalism, but today denounces stridently as deviationism and fanaticism.

Developments in Other Areas of Malaysian Life

Space and time limitations prevent me from undertaking a full:

enumeration of events, including those not rural-based, which will flesh out the general pattern the three examples cited above have revealed.

Briefly, however, the troubles of the Persatuan Aliran Kesedaran Negara (National Consciousness Movement), better known nationally and internationally as Aliran, demonstrate this growing trend towards governmental intolerance of dissent in Malaysia. For having spoken out on a wide variety of issues including corruption, religious chauvinism and intolerance, this intellectual-led movement based in the Science University of Malaysia, Penang, has been publicly described by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs as a "threat to national security" (*The Star*, December 23, 1980). Aliran has been accused of receiving support on the clandestine radio station of the Communist Party of Malaya, and it has complained publicly the letters purportedly coming from the communists have been received. Aliran believes that "certain irresponsible elements (are) trying desperately to stick the communist label on (us)" (*The Sunday Star*, March 1, 1981).

The similarity in the sequencing of events in the Aliran case with the other discussed above ought to be clear. Attempts are made to suppress dissenting views, and if these fail, strident charges that "communists" are somehow involved are made transforming the issue into a national security one.

More recently, steps have been initiated in Malaysia's Parliament to pass an amendment to the Societies Act which will limit the right of associations to make "political statements," give the Minister of Home Affairs power to deregister societies, there being no recourse to legal appeal in the civil courts.

It is widely interpreted in Malaysia that these amendments coming at this particular time are primarily intended to gag into impotence Aliran, and other such organizations engaged in social action.

When such actions against associations are viewed in the light of the systematic clipping of trade union rights in 1980, a disturbing pattern emerges. Public dissent is increasingly not welcomed by government leaders. After a period of verbally seeking to discredit critics and their organizations, and charges of consorting with "subversives" and "communists" made, and the paramouncy of "national security" reiterated, a legal coup de grace is attempted by making seemingly minor, yet on closer inspection very profound, changes in the legal charters which govern group activity in Malaysia.

The question that needs to be asked, then, is whether in the Malaysian Utopia there is in fact a creeping legal dictatorship?

The Pre-eminence of National Security

Security and development are the twin themes which in many ways overshadow everything else in Malaysia. The *Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980* warned against threats to national security of "communists and anti-national elements," and it promised that "mopping up operations," "surveillance" will be stepped up so that "all communist elements will be apprehended or annihilated." The Plan promised that:

the goals of ensuring national security, eradicating poverty and restructuring society point to a state of being where Malaysians can enjoy peace, prosperity and racial harmony. Peace will be interpreted in terms of being free from internal and external aggression or threat, harmony of interest at the political, social and cultural levels and a degree of stability that is conducive to the process of change and development.

In short, the maintenance of national security is seen as a pre-requisite to the attainment of the national goals of eradicating poverty and restructuring society. National security is a theme repeatedly drilled into Malaysians through the mass media. The following sample of news item headings in Malaysian newspapers tells its own story:

- "Reds infiltrating associations and parties"
- "No compromise on security"
- "Close watch on foreign ideologies"
- "The 'harmless' groups that threaten security"
- "Reds trying to move into youth clubs"
- "Sarawak still under Red threat"
- "Red Alert in Pahang"
- "21 Reds out of action but"
- "Perak plan to 'strangle' terrorist unit"

The casual reader of Malaysian newspapers may be forgiven if he concluded after reading banner headlines such as the above that Malaysia is about to be overrun by a Red tide. Twenty years after the official declaration of the end of the 1948-1960 Malayan Emergency in which the threat of communism was said to have been eliminated save for pockets of resistance on the Thai-Malaysian border (Short, 1975), it would now appear that a communist resurgence was underway in the about-to-be-Utopia. These assertions are made simultaneously with other announcements that there is "widespread discontentment among the rank and file (communists)" and that "morale among the terrorists is at a low ebb" (*New Straits Times*, February 11, 1981).

The only reasonable conclusion one can draw is that the "communist threat" is a useful device to keep Malaysians in line, yet at the same time, steps are taken to assure the foreign community, especially foreign investors, that their investments, especially long term ones are quite safe.

Muslim "deviants" and "fanatics" have joined the "Reds" as the major threats to "national security." The emergence of the former as a co-equal threat is probably the most remarkable development of the past half-decade in Malaysia.

The doctrine of National Security, Malaysian style

In recent years the so-called Doctrine of National Security has taken a firm hold on our continent. In reality it is more an ideology than a doctrine. It is bound up with a specific politico-economic model with elitist and verticalist features, which suppresses the broad-based participation of the people in political decision making . . . It elaborates a repressive system, which is in line with its concept of 'permanent war'.

This statement was issued in Puebla, Mexico, following the historic General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in January 1979. It outlines a doctrine of national security which has evolved in that part of the Third World and which justifies the violation, or limitation, of basic human rights on the grounds that national security is being threatened.

I propose to briefly examine the legal structures in Malaysia which govern civil rights, rights which are basic to the social science researcher if he is to undertake research to the best of his trained capability.

The Malaysian Federal Constitution assures the citizen in a key article the rights to freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peaceably, and the right to form associations (Article 10, clause 1). Then in literally the very next sentence it grants Parliament the right to restrict these rights when "necessary or expedient in the interest of the security of the Federation . . . public order and morality" (Article 10, clause 2). Parliament is even granted the right to prohibit the questioning of any matter protected by the constitutional provisions of Part III, Articles 152, 153 and 181. These pertain to the granting of citizenship, the establishment of Malay as the national language, the setting of quotas and the granting of "special rights" to the indigenous peoples, and the position and jurisdiction of the Malay rulers (sultans).

In other words, the Malaysian public is expressly prohibited from publicly discussing certain fundamental issues. At best this amendment to the Federal Constitution forced through by the ruling party at the time (in 1969 the essentially same constellation of political parties that rule now dominated parliament allowing them to force through the amendment) may be interpreted as a public declaration that Malaysians are not capable (yet) of dispassionately discussing these issues. At worse the gag amendment seeks to entrench certain features, and to ensure that these cannot be retracted.

Further, the Malaysian Federal Constitution provides for legislation

against "subversion" which it defines as efforts to cause fear and organized violence against persons or property; exciting disaffection against the King or government; promoting feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races or classes; and which is prejudicial to the security of the country (Article 149). Provisions enabling the proclamation of a state of emergency (Article 150) grants powers to the executive "notwithstanding anything in this Constitution" (Article 150, clause 4).

The systematic restriction of the civil rights of the Malaysian citizenry has also been achieved by the passage by Parliament of laws and regulations which describe in greater detail the manner in which these restrictions are to take place. Some examples of such legislation includes:

(a) *The Sedition Act*, 1948 (revised 1969) which defines "seditious tendencies" as bringing hatred or contempt against government; the raising of discontent or disaffection amongst the people; and the promotion of ill-will and hostility between different races or classes of the population.

The Act is primarily directed against acts of speech, words and publications, and it empowers the Minister to suspend newspapers containing seditious matter, and to ban the circulation of printed materials of a "seditious" nature.

(b) *The Printing Presses Act*, 1948 (revised 1971) which requires all documents, books, newspapers etc. published in Malaysia to get a license to publish annually. Further, no newspaper printed locally shall be sold, or distributed without the appropriate license.

This act is frequently cited by newsmen as the main reason for the distressing timidity of many of a Malaysian newspaper editor and publisher who has to worry over whether the annual license will be forthcoming or not.

(c) *Official Secrets Act*, 1972 which restricts access of the public to any government document not explicitly declassified. The Act requires a person charged with an offense under the act to prove that his actions were not prejudicial to the safety or interests of Malaysia. The burden of proof is not, therefore, on government to prove the act as prejudicial.

The Act has made doing research requiring data on government files increasingly difficult, and administrators have shown an increasing tendency to extend rather than restrict secrecy classifications.

(d) *Universities and University Colleges Act*, 1971 prohibits the establishment of any university except in accordance with the Act; prohibits student associations from having any affiliations with, or have anything to do which can be construed as expressing support, sympathy or opposition to any political party or trade union; and bans students from being office bearers in political parties and trade unions.

(e) *The Educational Institutions (Discipline) Act*, 1976 which

prohibits a student from becoming a member, or in any manner associate with any society, political party, trade union or any other organization, whether in Malaysia or without, except as may be approved in advance in writing by the Minister. Fines and jail sentences are prescribed offenders. Further, the collection of money both on and off campus is prohibited (unless Ministerial exemption is given). And office bearers are deemed to be guilty of any offences committed by individuals acting in the name of student organizations.

(f) *The Internal Security Act, 1960* (revised 1972) seeks to take action against those causing citizens to fear, organizing violence against persons and property, and seeking to change the lawful government by unlawful means. These are all deemed to be "prejudicial to the security of Malaysia."

The ISA is a vast piece of legislation effectively covering almost all aspects of Malaysian life. Of particular importance to us, however, are the provisions granting the Minister of Home Affairs the power of "preventive detention" which allows him to detain any such person (for renewable two-year periods) with the view to preventing him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia.

The Minister is also granted absolute power to prohibit the printing, sale and distribution of publications which incite violence, counsel disobedience to the law, are calculated to breach the peace, or promote feelings of hostility between the various races or classes of the population, or which are "prejudicial to the national interest, public order, or security of Malaysia."

The Minister is given the right to proclaim "security areas" within which those found guilty of carrying fire-arms are to be given by the courts a mandatory death sentence. The Act also enables the Minister to act against persons "who intend or are about to act, or have acted in a manner prejudicial to the public security of Malaysia."

It is not an exaggeration to conclude that the ISA is a blueprint for a virtual police state.

(g) *The Emergency (Essential Powers) Bill, 1979* validated retrospectively the announcement of a nationwide State of Emergency declared on February 20, 1971. Since this state of emergency has not been formally lifted even though the immediate cause of the imposition of the state of emergency has long since dissolved, it remains in effect. Malaysia, legally, is under, in the terminology of the Philippine Constitution, "martial law." It enables the proper authority to take any acts deemed "desirable or expedient for securing public safety, the defense of Malaysia, the maintenance of public order and of supplies and services . . ." It allows the apprehension, trial and punishment of persons detained by the Minister of

Home Affairs, allows special court procedures to be adopted, and allows that essential regulations, laws, orders and rules need not be consistent with existing law, including the Constitution.

(h) *The Aboriginal Peoples Act, 1954* (revised 1974) places the nation's aboriginal peoples under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Minister is empowered to establish aboriginal areas and reserves and decide on occupancy rights. He is given powers to prohibit undesirable persons from entering aboriginal areas and reserves; the right to confirm, and remove, hereditary headmen; and "prohibiting . . . the entry into or the circulation within any aboriginal area, aboriginal reserve or aboriginal inhabited places of any written or printed matter, any cinematograph film . . ."

The Act necessitates the anthropologist get permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs before he can even enter, let alone study an aboriginal community. The Department of Aborigines is the effective executive arm of this piece of legislation. Anthropologists report that since the early 1970s it has become increasingly difficult to get approval to do anything more than non-controversial ethnographic studies.

Is "Normal" Social Science Research Possible?

Constitutional dictatorship is today, and will continue to be in the stormy years before us, one of the most urgent problems to be solved by the men of constitutional democracies. It is more than just a problem; it is a compelling and anxious reality" (Rossiter, 1948: 314)

Rossiter's *Constitutional Dictatorship; Crisis Government in the Modern Democracies* (1948) was the seminal first book to comprehensively analyze the phenomenon of constitutional dictatorship. At first blush this appears a contradiction in poor taste, but Rossiter examines in great detail how governments in the West ranging from the Romans down the ages to twentieth century built into their democracies legal institutions (martial and emergency law rule, for example) which were necessary in times of crisis to preserve the national state.

The modern Third World, however, has advanced on the practices of Rossiter's western examples and has refined the concept of constitutional dictatorship to the nth degree. Malaysia is an outstanding example of a nation which uses threats to "national security" coming from within, be they communists, Muslim deviants and fanatics, drug addicts, etc., to build a case, superficially convincing, that the nation is under siege, and hence cannot afford the luxury of genuine democracy. Nevertheless, the Constitution is still regarded as the main legal document from which all others ensue, but it has been suitably modified to give a semblance of constitutionality to what would otherwise be deemed as repressive measures.

This then is the reality, that national setting which Msgr. Claver had talked about in his keynote address to the Second UGAT Conference in Baguio City, within which the would-be Malaysian social scientist researcher finds himself in. The basic question he has to ask himself is: Under these conditions, is normal research possible?

My answer to this question is as follows: Yes, if you have no conscience, no sense of concern for your fellowmen (your about-to-become subject of study). No, if you are sensitive to the dictates of simple justice and your conscience.

Simple justice? How can deviants and fanatics be accorded such sympathetic consideration? After all, it was they who had launched a viscious attack on innocent policemen and women. The fact remains, however, that the social scientist has to identify the main social forces operating in his general study area for clues to the correct understanding of specific events. It ought to be clear from the analyses presented in this paper that "deviants," "fanatics" and "holy warriors" are terms used by government spokesmen and popularized by the mass media to shift attention away from legitimate dissent and protest by emphasizing sensational features of the dissenters. And if such sensational features are not available, then the well-tryed stand-by "communism" is frequently used which plays on the fears of the Malaysian public (fears that government propaganda is primarily responsible for in the first place) that "terrorists" are involved.

I have avoided in this paper seeking to explain the reasons behind the mounting dissent which, ironically, parallels advancements in the fields of social and economic development. In another paper I would be tempted to apply a political economy model which would seek to interpret the tensions in Malaysian society as the working out in society of the emerging contradictions in the evolving Malaysian capitalist economy. Even in the absence of such an analysis, I submit that the anthropologist, that student of small groups of human beings (cultic or otherwise) ought to feel the impelling necessity to act in concert with others to do something to change the ground rules which have been so masterly manipulated to bring into being the constitutional dictatorship that Malaysia is today.

Telling the truth about so-called "deviants" and "fanatics" so that the public will be better informed as to their real identities and objectives, standing up for the rights of individuals and groups of individuals, be they Islamic revivalists or "modern" consciousness advancement groups such as Aliran, and objecting to legislation that systematically restricts basic civil liberties must be the working order of the day of the Third World anthropologist and social scientist.

In this sense, we must play a direct role in shaping the political

power relationships in whose web we are inextricably entangled. If we abstain there will come a time, and in Malaysia that time is NOW, when a point of no return will have been reached; a point where the concentration of power in the hands of the few will be so great that nothing short of a potentially violent course of action may have to become necessary if any real change in the power configurations within which we undertake our research are to be effected.

If this is what we have to urgently do, how can it be possible to do "normal" research? "Normal" research can only be justified if we are able to hide our heads ostrich-like in the sand and ignore the power forces operating all around us.

To ignore these power configurations would, I submit, be a dereliction in our professional commitment to pursue the truth wherever it may take us.