

**Titles can be bought, but not knowledge**

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YOURSAY 'Aziz Bari, if your peers recognise you for your work, it does not matter whether you carry the title of professor or not.'

UIA out to embarrass me, says Aziz Bari

your sayZana: Whatever Abdul Aziz Bari's knowledge, it seems he is the one who's being ignorant and misleading. The public tends to use the word "professor" without understanding the fact that it's an official post in a university, not a title.

One gets to be addressed as "professor" while holding the post whether one has a PhD or not. Once you retire or cease to hold the post for whatever reason, you are no longer a professor.

Aziz Bari, for instance, now can be acknowledged more appropriately as Encik Aziz Bari, PhD in law and former UIA (Universiti Islam Antarabangsa) professor.

So why the fuss? Is it Aziz himself who wants to be addressed as "professor" when he's no longer one?

ACR: This is in response to the comment by Zana. Is it a norm for universities to announce on the last day of service of a professor that henceforth the person is no longer a professor since he is leaving service?

It is never done as such. UIA's public announcement shows blatant bad faith against Aziz.

Manjit Bhatia: Aziz Bari, I must say I find UIA administrators' decision to revoke your professorship childish, churlish, immature and unprofessional and unethical.

I don't know if it breaches any Malaysian laws, the universities statutes or your contract. But this sounds like their vendetta, acted upon for their political masters. They're making royal fools of themselves - again.

But obviously you don't care much for titles, do you? You said it yourself. And they are mere titles that, at base, simply shows your status within an academic community.

But see yourself as bigger than mere titles, especially Malaysian titles, and do not resilie, ever, from the fact that, as academics, nobody - not a low-brow government, not a low-brow university like UIA - can take away our knowledge, our dignity and our freedom.

Shanandoah: Aziz Bari, you are an intellectual and brave to speak the truth. Nowadays all sorts of nincompoops are given all sorts of titles because they lick Umno boots. Some even become senators or ministers, and end up a disgrace to the nation.

We know you are worth much more than just being a professor in a university that hardly has any recognition in world rankings. Malaysians will vote for you come GE 13.

Hang Babeuf: Those who live and die by the craven values and servile 'thinking' of a status-obsessed society and culture really do believe that by depriving somebody of their 'honorific' title and form of addresses (such as 'Professor'), they can really kill a person and inflict 'social death' upon a suddenly disapproved person and his family.

It is silly to think so. It is silly for them to believe it and act upon that view. It is no less silly in their adversaries, when those against whom these vindictive status-addicts act as if they think so too, agree with that nonsense. You understand, saudara?

Swipenter: Professor Aziz Bari, you are absolutely right to say that UIA can take away your title but not your knowledge and expertise, and may I add, diminish you as a man.

Whatever they do, you are still a professor to us. What is the point in a 'professor' title if that person is perceived to be a 'kangkong' professor by his/her students, peers and the public?

V4Change: All that embarrassing action taken against Professor Aziz Bari will become blessing in disguise. You will see it in GE13 after the result is known.

UIA will learn the lesson and so too the BN, and by then it will be too late to withdraw all the action done. They will be so sorry for it.

Hermit: It's sad for UIA to visualise itself as an international university yet behaves like a nursery.

UIA may take away the professorship for whatever dastardly reasons, but not the knowledge and expertise Aziz Bari has.

The university's action is tantamount to making its professorship equivalent to the abused datukship, which can be bought and sold.

Cala: To Prof Aziz Bari, it is the contribution of knowledge gained through research in service of humankind that counts, not the 'humanly created titles'.

As an example, look at KS Jomo - does he have any of those honorific title (like JP, Dato, Dato Seri, Tan Sri)?

Despite the 'handicapped', and this sort of deficiency, Jomo is an internationally acclaimed researcher who used to co-author many books with some of the best brains from top universities (London University, for example).

But of course, in 'kampong' Malaysia, a Dato or Professor title tends to make one stands apart from other mortals.

Puchong Mali: What speaks for an academic is his/her academic work and knowledge. If your peers recognise you for your work and knowledge, it does not matter whether you carry the title of professor or not.

In this case UIA, in effect, ends up embarrassing itself.

YF: This is how Umno treats the cream of the Malay academicians. They sack you if you use your brains and conscience. Tragic indeed.

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