

'Idiocrats' running the country?

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In his regular column in The Sun, Citizen Nades was perplexed why the "bureaucrats behaved as they did" in the now infamous Klang High School case of "closing down of the non-Muslim religious associations." I am not; as these are precisely the type of public servants who become Little Napoleons and zealots who impose their worldview upon others.

In the past few columns I had gone to some lengths to coin and define a new term to describe such people in public service. We need to understand their framework of operations and logic systems so that we can improve our public services generally.

NONEI coined the term "idiocrats" to describe and explain and thereby understand how these self-appointed zealots work. The case-story of the Klang High School principal and state Education Department's "mis-directive" fits my description of such idiocrats, and why these individuals need to be "removed from public service" for their unprofessional conduct.

Dictionary.com defines a bureaucrat as an official of a bureaucracy, or an official who works by fixed routine without exercising intelligent judgment. In my lexicon, the "idiocrat" not only feigns non-intelligence but also goes to the other extreme and "uses interpretive bias to interpret the translation of government policies at their own whim or fancy".

And usually they use the Ketuanan Melayu syndrome and mindset promoted by the likes of Perkasa. How else does the Selangor state or district Education Department not only give such a directive but then goes ahead to actually oversee implementation of the decision to "close down non-Muslim organizations in schools?"

And, shamefully the parents of most of these schoolchildren are also "idiocrats" of yet another magnitude and order! They do not know, but do not even know that they do not know! So, they do nothing about it!

Idiocrats allow 'Hitlers' to rise

Idiocrat citizens when in the majority allow the "Hitlers of the world" to rise! Please read a book by Eric Fromm called 'Escape from Freedom', wherein he gives his theory of why the majority of Germans allowed or tolerated Hitler. It was their escape from God-given freedom; and thereby responsibility.

christian faith 030108 crossAnd, even more seriously, what else can explain how a school principal "abides by such an illegitimate directive blindly given by yet another disobedient idiocrat?" Should not a school principal know the constitution and Article 3 which guarantees the rights of all faiths in Malaysia?

Does the Education Ministry even teach their teachers the federal constitution? Does the Principals Training Institute at Genting Highlands even teach the rights and privileges of all citizens under the federal constitution? Or is it only about the Ketuanan Melayu agenda?

I ask these fundamental questions because, at INTAN, we did teach all public servants the foundations of the rule of law in this nation. All public servants, regardless of role and function must understand that they serve at the pleasure of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and therefore must serve "professionally and without fear or favour."

They should be colour-blind in the service of this nation. They should only be fearful if the law is being abused; never otherwise!

Election by 'proxy'

This is not a new issue either. Therefore, let me give another actual case story which I saw unravel right before my very own eyes. I will quote some names and places so that the authenticity of my storyline can be verified by those who do not believe me.

The year was 1997 and the school Bukit Bintang Boys Secondary School in Petaling Jaya. Najib Abdul Razak was then the Education Minister. I was by default elected into the PIBG by the "explicit connivance of the school principal whose teacher called and invited my wife to attend the PIBG meeting". I was overseas in Canada.

At the PIBG AGM, my name was nominated for the vice-president's post and thereby duly elected. My wife was the proxy for me by virtue of the fact that it is a "parent-teacher association" and not a father-teacher association. Either parent can be elected, even though I was not present, and my wife was not nominated either. Her presence at the AGM legitimised my election. Sorry, rule books on elections; idocrats rule on the ground!

While serving in the PIBG with another RMC Old Putera, we heard that the Buddhist association was told to cease their activities within the school compound. A parent had requested for the issue to be raised at the AGM but the serving school principal confirmed that it was a directive from the district Education Department.

NONEI advised her that I was a public servant too and that all such "directives must be given in writing to have real efficacy". I therefore asked her to show me the directive before the AGM or else I will raise the issue at the AGM.

At the AGM, the Buddhist parent raised the issue and the principal gave the same reply and I chose to publicly contradict her and advice that unless it is in writing and supported by the Education Minister, then "new policy should not be executed." The principal was aghast that I chose to contradict her publicly over the matter.

The AGM became somewhat tense at this point with many parents speaking for my "version of truth". Then a true blue former public servant at heart and former PIBG president of the school and then the serving director of the Institut Aminuddin Baki spoke in support of the constitutional principle of the freedom for the exercise of faith for all Malaysians. Truth matters!

The matter ended there and about a week later the Education Minister clarified that "there is no such policy to discriminate against other faiths". Something similar had also happened at a school in Subang Jaya and the matter came to the attention of parents, the media, and the Education Department authorities.

Questions for the director-general

But today, let me publicly ask the director-general of education to answer my questions below about this so-called "operational policy of idocrats". While he has clarified publicly and rather clearly that all religions can exercise their faith in schools, based on the circular in 2000; unless there is absolute clarity about constitution-related truth principles, the Napoleons continue to rule on the ground.

Therefore, my questions to the DG:

1. Was not the Bukit Bintang Secondary School always a mission school? Does not the land belong to the mission authorities of the Brethren Church?
2. How is it then that while the crosses and crucifixes or symbols of "Church ownership" have been totally removed in schools, why then impose and build a surau into the school in lieu of and in place of the so-called offensive Christian symbols? Are other faiths secondary or not relevant under the Umno philosophy of governance?
3. Why is a Muslim prayer recited every Monday morning in some schools? Why not observe a minute of silence so that every faithful person can make their personal prayers premised on their own belief systems? Is not the belief in God a principle of the Rukunegara which is preached and propagated by the ministry? Does not the Quran also say, "to each his own?"

I think the basic confusion is the idea that Islam is the official religion of the federation. It is not. The constitution only says it is the religion of the federation but protects and preserves the practice of every other faith. Which, to me, if well-interpreted means that in places like the Agong's Palace we can use Islamic prayers for formalities!

But it surely does not mean Islamic activities can be propagated and promoted within schools, to the detriment and exclusion of other faith systems! Or, another alternative is what I learned at Police College. They used the common prayer in Malay, "Di atas segala yang kita nikmati, kami bersyukur kepada Tuhan!"

This case highlighted by Citizen Nadeswaran is a good one; and I thank him for making this a public issue. But, my question to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Aziz is why is he and not the Education Minister dealing with this issue?

If a mere head of department at the state level can play "politics" like this even without the support of the ministry and the minister, who really are the idocrats running this country? Ordinary Umno members? Please pray for Malaysia. One minute's silence please.

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