

**Patriotism, Mr Mayor, is not in flying a flag**  
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COMMENT Ipoh Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim has issued a ruling to all shops and business premises in the city to fly the Jalur Gemilang on National Day on 31 August and the state flag during the Sultan of Perak's birthday on 19 April if their want their business licences renewed.

Roshidi said those who failed to comply with the ruling would also be compounded or blacklisted.

According to Roshidi, the new ruling is part of the effort by the Ipoh City Council to inculcate patriotism among city folks, especially the business communities.

This is another of those nincompoop rulings by a smart-aleck Little Napoleon using blackmail arm-twisting tactics to enforce a gimmick found only in countries ruled by authoritarian dictatorial governments such as Nazi Germany or the Japanese Imperial Administration during War World Two.

In Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler imposed a ruling that all business establishments, offices, institutions and private homes must fly the Nazi flag as part of the effort to inculcate loyalty and patriotism in the Third Reich among the German population.

During the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, all premises, both shops and residential houses, were forced to fly the Nisshoki, the national flag of Japan, whether or not they loved Japan or its Emperor.

And taking the obviously illogical Ipoh City Council ruling, which only a dunce could think of, to its logical conclusion, then the Road Transport Department should also impose a ruling making it mandatory that all vehicles must fly the Jalur Gemilang or their registration will not be renewed. This will ensure (sic) that all drivers are loyal and patriotic.

The English word patriot has its root in the ancient Greek word patriots which means simply "fellow countryman". In the 6th century, its Latin form patriota also simply mean "fellow countryman". The abstract noun "patriotism" in the English language first appeared in the early 18th century.

Those who have studied the ancient Greek life, thoughts, history and culture will know and understand that "patriotism" in the Greek society comprised notions concerning language, religion, ethics, law, and commitment to the common good, rather than merely absolute identification with the state or what the Greeks called "polis".

The famous Greek philosopher Socrates has been recorded as saying that patriotism does not require one to agree with and accept everything his country does. Rather, he said, a patriotic and loyal citizen would actually promote critical and analytical questioning in a quest to make his country the best it possibly can be and become.

In other word, a real patriotic and loyal citizen is not one who flies the Jalur Gemilang on their cars, shouts patriotic slogans, sing patriotic songs, paint their houses or vehicles with the Jalur Gemilang, bake cakes with designs of the Jalur Gemilang. All these are shallow, superficial and meaningless wild gesticulations.

A true loyal patriotic citizen is one who really loves his country, and is devoted and dedicated to ensure that the ideals of truth, rule of law, equality, justice and fairness will flourish among fellow citizens, irrespective of origin, colour, creed, gender, culture, or class. Such a true loyal patriotic citizen will stand up and speak out, without fear and favour, and be counted in the war against any injustice, corruption, discrimination, and irregularities in the administration of the country.

It is not just flying a flag, shouting slogans, and singing patriotic songs that make one a loyal patriotic citizen. Those who think that by enforcing such a ruling like flying the Jalur Gemilang will inculcate patriotism among the people are imbecile with real shallow thinking, not fit to be in a position of leadership.

Is any such shallow supercilious civil servant authorized to impose such an imperious and peremptory condition for doing business or getting a licence to trade? Note that such a ruling directly infringes on the fundamental human and constitutional right of the citizens to do business without hindrance, encumbrance and discrimination.

Instead of promoting patriotism among the people, such preposterous, ridiculous, and ludicrous ruling, with the unjust and unconstitutional condition that permits to trade will be withheld if the Jalur Gemilang is not flown in the business premises or shops, will result in deep resentment among the people. When the Japanese Imperial Army forced all building owners to fly the Nisshoki, and to bow to very Japanese the people come across, did it create any love for Japan? Ask your grandfathers or grandmothers.

Patriotism cannot be enacted by legislation or demanded by force. Patriotism, like respect, can only be cultivated by winning the hearts and minds of the people.

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