

**Liberation Day @ 428**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**April 29, 2012**  
**By CL Tang**

Malaysians who participated in yesterday's Bersih 3.0 saw firsthand, just how superficial and farcical is the BN's government claims of reforms to make Malaysia the best democracy in the world.

That the so-called best democracy can deny the hundred thousand strong Malaysians the right to peacefully assemble at Independence Square.

That the so-called best democracy would rather employ thousands of police personnel to surround an EMPTY square, on the whims of an UNELECTED junior official, trampling over the wishes of thousands of Malaysians.

That the so-called best democracy fired tear gas after tear gas into a crowd that was ALREADY dispersing after a largely peaceful protest.

My friends and I were boxed into a car park with nowhere to go, and as the air filled with the acrid smoke and breathing becomes difficult, I wonder if this is the wind of change that our PM is espousing.

So much for BN's Peaceful Assembly Act.

Today, the mainstream media has already began the complete whitewash of the biggest national event this year.

By focusing their blatant biased reporting to isolated cases of admittedly over-zealous acts, they failed to showcase the true 1Malaysia in action, where the young and the old from all races walked hand in hand, where we began the march as total strangers but ended the walk as brothers and sisters united in a noble cause.

So much for BN's Printing Presses and Publications Act reforms.

But don't fret, Malaysians. The hundred thousand strong who were there will tell the world what really happened. Fathers will share with their sons, mothers with daughters, grandparents with their grandchildren, friends with friends.

Malaysians who missed the rally will learn the truth - of the bravery and courage of thousands of their fellow Malaysians who stood up to demand what should have been rightfully ours from the very start - free and fair elections.

Bersih 3.0 @ 428 is a milestone in our nation's history. Though we may have achieved independence from the colonial masters half a century ago, we now have a new oppressor, who sees Malaysia as their personal fiefdom and property.

For too long, as our rights are trampled, our nation's wealth plundered, we remained silent, submissive, cowered. We dared not stand up to the authorities.

428 has opened up our eyes; freed our subservient minds; fired up our oppressed hearts. As we see fellow Malaysians chanting "Hidup Rakyat", "Bersih! Bersih" and singing 'Negaraku', we each found our own voices again. That each one of us must speak up and be counted.

As we walked away from the peaceful protest, teary-eyed caused by the tear gas and heart still beating furiously because we had thought we were trapped, my best friend, a father of two young children turned

to me and asked, "so, was it worth it?"

No affirmation were needed as we smiled at each other. Bersih 3.0 @ 428 is a historic and momentous day for this bunch of fathers, as it has liberated our fears and our minds.

It will serve as a strong message to the present ruling party, that you can no longer close our thoughts, shut our voices, nor can you deny us our rights.

Happy Liberation Day, Malaysians.

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