

**My Bersih 3.0 experience: Smiles, smiles, smiles**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**April 29, 2012**  
**By Uncle Yap**

At 10 this morning (April 28) I started out towards the city. The stretch from my house off Jalan Sepadu to the junction to MidValley took me more than 75 minutes as motorists reaching the junction were forced to go either left to PJ or right toward Jalan Sungei Besi.

At Bersih 2.0, I went left and became caught in an unending series of traffic jams caused by police road-blocks and never made it to the city.

This time, I opted to go right and then into Taman Seputeh. Then I crossed into Brickfield and when I saw so many police personnel, I thought it discreet to park somewhere and continue on foot (after all, I am a Hash runner who can run 7-8km without problem).

Little India in Brickfield was filled with about a few hundred people, all smiling and cheerful for a beautiful day. I stopped to buy two deep-fried dhal cakes from a vendor and when he saw my yellow Hash T-shirt, he said "Free for you". But this is a hard worker eking out a meagre living; so I left the RM1 note, thanked him and walked away.

The junction where YMCA is was also filled with hundreds of people in yellow and other colours. I looked around trying to see whether I could buy a yellow Bersih T-shirt; no luck.

Walking along towards Central Market, you see policemen everywhere in dark blue in groups of fours. The front of Central Market was crammed tight with probably more than a couple of thousand people. Again, the mood was cheery and happy.

Then I came to the Bar Council Building along Lebuhraya Pasar Besar and here the crowd was well organised. One group urged everybody to sit down and a lady led everybody in some rhythmic cheers "Bersih! Bersih! Duduk! Bagus!"

On the bridge across Sungei Gombak, barbed wires were laid and police personnel stood behind plastic barriers. I even met an old classmate from Kluang whom I have not seen for a long long time.

I walked along the river side to reach Jalan Tun Perak (the old Jalan Mountbatten) and here the crowds were in their thousands; all smiling in a festive atmosphere; some having a picnic as it was already past midday.

Everybody but everybody was well-behaved. No pushing, no shoving, no jostling; it was all smiles, smiles, smiles. A group of policemen walked single-file through the crowd and someone in yellow shouted,

"Tolong tepi, biar lepas" (Please move aside and let them pass). It was that kind of civility and peaceful politeness that prevailed.

I then peered over the barriers to see Dataran Merdeka being protected with several layers of police personnel. No way today is the Dataran Merdeka to be breached or reached.

Then at 1.15, there was some excitement. The lead FRU truck with three officers on board moved into position directly in the middle of the road facing the huge crowd across Jalan Tun Perak.

He rang a bell and promptly a few lines of FRU personnel with shields and tear-gas rifles moved into

position. Another command was shouted out and they loaded their rifles and assumed a kneeling position, poised to shoot their noxious cocktails at the peaceful crowd in the distance.

A youth next to me sprang into action. Passing me a paper mask to put on, he also pulled out a bag of salt and asked me to distribute.

I went round giving everybody around me a few grains to swallow and said to myself "Oh no, why spoil a lovely day by such an action. Nobody is creating trouble but the police"

Thankfully, that was just a posturing by the PDRM as if to tell the crowd "If it has crossed your mind to try and break through our cordons, better uncross or else .... " and the timbre and manner of the police officer came across as pugnacious and provocative.

I then saw a friend from up the viaduct and joined him there for a marvellous view of the confrontation scene below.

After some time, it became a bit boring and hot; so I walked towards Masjid Negara. Layer after layer of the men in blue lined the way. I was so tempted to ask "Polis juga duduk bantah?"

By the time I reached the National Mosque, it was already 3pm and I was told that the huge crowd here had joined Anwar Ibrahim to walk towards Dataran Merdeka.

I was getting hot, hungry and thirsty and decided that it has been a peaceful demonstration that did credit to both the people and the Police and it was time to go home. All were to be commended for their restraint and patience.

How wrong I was to be when I reached home and started reading about tear gas being fired.



