

**Glimpses of an arresting party and quarry**  
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As accusations and counter accusations swirl in the immediate aftermath of Bersih 3.0, the following account may shed perspective on the conduct of a few score Bersih participants and their captors that was observed near Dataran Merdeka.

I witnessed scenes enacted between 4.30pm and 6pm on a stretch of Jalan Raja fronting the main entrance to the Tudor-style clubhouse of the Royal Selangor Club (RSC).

At about 4.30pm, from a vantage point at the top of the stairs to the main entrance of the RSC clubhouse, police personnel could be seen forcibly carting each individual they had arrested to a temporary holding area on the road in front of the main exit of the club.

If NONE the detainee was male, a policeman would be grasping the top back part of the person's T-shirt (the arrested were almost all clad in Bersih yellow shirts) while impelling him towards the holding area before sitting him down on the road.

If the captive was female, a policewoman would be propelling the detainee towards the holding area by placing a firm right palm on the upper back of the detainee.

In each instance, the arresting party was a step to the left and rear of the detainee such that the latter would be propelled merely by momentum of the accompanying police personnel's brisk pace.

The detained appeared to have been interdicted at the intersection of Jalan Raja Laut with Jalan Tun Perak and at the junction of Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman with the part of Jalan Tun Perak contiguous with Jalan Raja.

NONEThese were the locations where the police had claimed some Bersih protesters had attempted to breach the barricades the cops had put up to prevent people from congregating at Dataran Merdeka which is located in the part of Jalan Raja that runs in front of the iconic Sultan Abdul Samad Building.

NONEIn all, something like a hundred detainees were made to sit on the road adjoining the hedgerow fence that separates the RSC club's few external parking bays from the ones just inside the perimeter fence of the club.

The detainees were mainly men but there were also several young women who were made to sit alongside the men. All races were represented, with Malays comprising a majority.

Among the detainees was former International Islamic University law lecturer Dr Abdul Aziz Bari who was quick to stand up and remonstrate with the police at any hint of heavy handedness in the latter's handling of a detainee they had marched to the holding area.

One policeman was jeered when he strutted menacingly towards a detainee who had stood up from his sitting position.

The upstanding gesture must have been viewed by the cop as a show of recalcitrance that required the firm slap down of the law.

Aziz Bari's quick remonstrance, instantaneously supported by fellow detainees, was seen to swerve the policeman away from the apparent target of his intimidating advance. The target itself was nonchalant in the teeth of menacing police pressure.

Cleaning up rubbish in holding area

When PKR vice-president Tian Chua was brought to the holding area at around 5.30p m, the entire group spontaneously rose to gesticulate angrily in protest at a cop who shoved the Batu MP as an apparent altercation broke out between the two. Tian Chua was not passive to the treatment he received.

NONE That episode was emblematic of kindred feeling among the detainees although when first made to sit down as a group, they had displayed no obvious esprit de corps.

At one point, a few detainees got out from the cloth bags they were seen clutching prayer mats NONE which they spread on the ground to recite their asar prayers.

A sympathetic RSC member ordered canned soft drinks from the club for thirsty-seeming detainees. This must have helped wet throats parched from the effects of the hot sun and the ordeal of detention.

NONE

A coterie of lawyers was seen briefing the detainees after they a chat with police officers. A medical man attended to one detainee who sat on a culvert with head bowed between his knees in apparent distress.

To a person, the detainees all looked as NONE if their arrests were badges they were willing and proud to earn in a struggle to assert their dignity.

When it was time for them to be trucked off to the overnight holding centre at Pulapol in Jalan Semarak, they made a neat pile on the road of the emptied soft drink cans and cartons from which they had earlier relieved their thirst as if littering the place was not something that would accord with their sense of innate dignity.

Subliminally, this was a grace note which sat uneasily with the imputed disorderliness that had forced their arrest in the first place.

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