

**Confessions of a typical tidak-apa Malaysian**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**May 02, 2012**  
**By EeLing Wong**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 2 — I used to think...

... the government? They're not that bad... as long as my pockets are full, live in nice digs, have a fancy ride, my stomach never goes hungry and I still have spare change to indulge in shoes, handbags, pedicures and a vacation now and then... let's not rock the boat. Reformasi? Protest? Aiya... what for? Cause traffic jam only!

... Me vote? Nah... Nobody deserves my vote — not the opposition, nor the ruling party. As long as I can continue to do my thing, can afford my indulgences, the government can continue to do theirs. Not happy with the government? We complain only lor, but truth be told, better the devil you know, than the devil you don't.

... The rampant corruption? Aiya, if you want things to happen fast, have to pay more lor. After all, I'm as much to blame for the RM50 'kopi duit' for speeding. Else have to go balai polis to pay saman... very mah fan lah. I'd rather bri.. err... pay 'up front'... !

So what changed?

Was it March 2008 — while the opposition gained momentum, I was at home, keeping tabs on the election on TV, with a tinge of regret that I wasn't part of that. Was it Bersih 2.0, when I was glued to the computer, reading the whole thing on the sidelines, watching YouTube, with a pang of envy for those who had the tenacity to join the protest. Secretly admiring their courage, but thinking "Wah.. some people so brave hor. But it's not my thing lah. Some people can do it, some can't, and I'm of the latter".

So what changed indeed??

Perhaps it was the incessant cases of corruption and cows, of submarines and bombs, porn-star ministers and mistresses getting millions? Perhaps it was the victory in Penang, my home state and the good that Lim Guan Eng has done that made me think — change is and can be good. We can make a difference.

So, come 428, Bersih 3.0, with two other friends and her mother and brother, we decided to go. Honestly, I was there, on a whim, more than a compulsion, caught up in the frenzy of the Bersih fever. To say I went for the next generation would be very altruistic, but a lie. I have no children of my own to 'leave' the country to. To say it was for the millions of face-less rakyat, would just be politically correct at the very most.

At 428, the aftermath, sitting in Dang Wangi LRT station, waiting for train services to resume, having had my first experience of tear gas, I pondered on this. What on earth compelled this puteri-lilin to participate in Bersih 3.0. — to have braved the hot sun (yes, this puteri slathered layers of sunblock to protect the skin!), then take the LRT (probably

my second time) and walk amongst the large crowd, all smelly and sweaty, feeling hungry and thirsty and get stung by tear gas. Was it worth it?

Well, yes it was!

Singing "Negara Ku", chanting the Bersih football song in the true muhibah fashion, the camaraderie of people, was exhilarating, no doubt. But something awoke from within — a renewed pride in myself. I proved to no one, but myself, ME... that there was more to this shallow shoe-junkie, designer-bag-totting siew-cheh. Not so deep within, that sense of social justice, to right the wrong, to support all that is fair and good, to demand for fairness and equality was burning embers within.

You could say I found myself, rather, I surprised myself! I now know I am not the lembik, tidak-apa individual, typical of most. I will no longer stay silent. When the push comes to a shove, even with water cannons and tear gas thrown in, even if I am afraid, I will fight for the cause, defend my rights, because, I CAN. And I WILL stand tall amongst my fellow Malaysians, and be counted.

It is quite liberating!

I say this, not as self-praise. But to think... if one as come-what-may tidak-apa as me, can awake from my apathetic mode and indignantly jump off the proverbial fence to take a stand, wow... what more the others. Now, I understand the fervent passion of my more politically inclined friends.

Together, a strong force, we shall be. We, the rakyat will reclaim our sovereignty. We demand a government that serves its people, not make servants of them. We will demand for the elections to be di-Bersihkan so the people's choice can prevail. We will vote for a prime minister who is a true leader, with integrity and honour.

... and while we reclaim our nation, this reformed tidak-apa siew-cheh with her new found courage, will wrestle that limited-edition turquoise ostrich Birkin off you-know-who's pudgy arms!

HIDUP RAKYAT. HIDUP BERSIH!

\* This is the personal opinion of the writer and does not necessarily represent the views of The Malaysian Insider.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/confessions-of-a-typical-tidak-apa-malaysian/>