



The Tanjong Declaration

Towards a Just, Equal, and
Democratic Malaysia

by

The Democratic Action Party

NASKHAH PEMELIHARAAN
PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA

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The Tanjong Declaration

Towards a Just, Equal and Democratic Malaysia

This Special Congress in Tanjong, Penang on the first of December 1991 marks a historic juncture after 25 years of struggle of the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia.

In these 25 years, our basic beliefs and principles in the defence of freedom, democracy and human rights of all Malaysians have not been compromised even though we have had to contend with shameless repression, bribery and corrupt tactics of the Barisan Nasional.

Although we have been in the Opposition during these 25 years, our contribution in the interest of the rakyat of all ethnic communities is clear for all Malaysians to see, whether it be the defence of our Parliamentary democracy, accountability, civil liberties and human rights, or fighting for the interests of the general public, consumers, workers, farmers, hawkers, fishermen and squatters.

The years ahead are full of promise and challenges. The formation of Gagasan Rakyat just before the 1990 General Elections has opened a new vista in the perspective of our political struggle. The readiness of the main parties in the Opposition to unite for the sake of saving Malaysia from the ravages of the Barisan Nasional was the most heartening development in Malaysian politics to date.

We in the DAP have learned hard lessons during this period of time. But we are gathered here today, clear in our conscience, proud to hold our heads up high in reaffirming our basic guiding political beliefs and principles for a just, equal and democratic Malaysian society.

I. DAP's Fundamental Values and Political Principles

The DAP is committed to the struggle for a free and

democratic socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of human rights, equality, social and economic justice, and founded on the institutions of parliamentary democracy. We are opposed to power relationships and privileges of those who monopolise economic and political interests and exploit the masses.

Freedom involves the renunciation of the kind of dictatorship practised by the BN as well as the self-determination of the people on the basis of social responsibility. But the attainment of human freedom requires material and social preconditions, ie. the freedom from want, fear, ignorance, patronage and exploitation.

As democratic socialists, we want a social order in which there can be free development of the human personality within the community; in which there will be just distribution of the fruits of our work; where equality and social justice is the norm and where there is dignity and value placed on human work.

Equality is the precondition of the free development of the personality. It does not mean uniformity and levelling out, but the opposition to exploitation and privileges of those controlling economic and political power.

Democracy must not be limited to having elections once every few years as the BN tries to do to justify their undemocratic rule. Democracy is based on the free participation of all members of society at all levels of political institutions. For this reason, the elective principle of democracy must extend to all areas of society, from local governments to the Senate. At the same time, democracy does not mean only the rule of the majority in the interest of the majority. It also means tolerance and the guarantee of freedom and rights of the minorities.

We do not oppose Islam or any religions but we cannot accept the imposition of an Islamic State in Malaysia because of the substantial numbers of non-Muslims in this country. An Islamic State would curtail the rights and interests of all non-Muslims in Malaysia and is against the