

# **Ideological Paradox of the United National Party**

**Karnasuri Ragalage Anuruddha Pradeep Perera**



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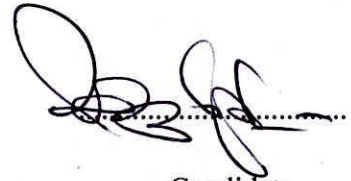
Thesis for the Master of Arts (Research) in Political Science for the University of Sri  
Jayewardenepura

## **Declaration by the Candidate**

This work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Piyadasa Athukorala, Department of Political Science, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or part to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

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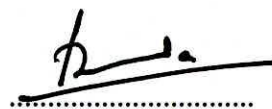
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I certify that above statement made by the candidate is true and that this thesis is suitable for submission to the university for the purpose of evaluation.



.....  
Prof. Piyadasa Athukorala

I certify that the candidate has incorporated all corrections, amendments and additions recommended by the examiners.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized first letter followed by several loops and a horizontal stroke, positioned above a solid line and a dotted line.

Supervisor

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## **Ideological Paradox of the United National Party**

**By K. R. A. P. PERERA**

### **Abstract**

In almost all democratic countries where there are competitive electoral systems of two parties or two coalitions, the political parties, especially the main two parties, can be seen to be divided as the left wing and the right wing. These left and right wing parties have their own distinguishing characteristics and ideological positions and values different from each other which clearly demonstrate the differences between them. The right wing parties in the world, thus, by and large share the ideological positions which are described as right wing and these differentiate them from their rival left wing parties which have their own ideological positions common among them. Party ideologies of the left are modern liberalism, the contemporary form of liberalism and social democracy, the moderate version of socialism that can be practised in democracies. The ideologies of the right are conservatism and its other forms. Because of this difference in ideological foundation, the policies which stem from these foundations are clearly different from each other.

All left wing social democratic or modern liberal parties are proponents of social equality and hence they are less enthusiastic about the market economy than their right wing counterparts and they are very much concerned about the minority and less privileged sections of society such as ethnic minorities, religious minorities, the poor, homosexuals and women. Right wing parties, by contrast, support pro market economic policies and politically and socially they are nationalist or ethno-nationalist. Almost all right wing and

conservative parties in the world have a solid link with the majority ethnic and religious community of their respective countries and they represent and uphold the interests of those communities.

Although the United National Party is considered the right wing and conservative party in Sri Lanka, it is not difficult to see that the UNP lacks the political and social aspect of right wing politics. The UNP is no doubt the party which advocates pro market policies more than any other major party in the country, being the right wing economic policy. However, it is different when it comes to political and social policies. Although the UNP should have been the 'Sinhala nationalist' party of the country, if it is to fit the pattern of other right wing parties in the world, it is the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) that enjoys that position now. It is not the SLFP, the social democratic party of the country that is more appealing to ethnic and religious minorities, but the 'right wing' UNP, which should have been the pro Sinhala party.

This research studies this unique nature of the ideological background and political position of one of the two main parties, the United National Party, since it is the oldest among them and its policies and positions have had a great impact to the other main party, the SLFP, to have a similar ideological mixture in it. This study, unlike all the previous studies on the UNP is mainly focused on the ideological aspect of the party and it is conducted in three main steps: 1) studying the left-right political divide in the world and ideologies related to them; 2) studying the ideological basis of the UNP; and 3) studying the causes of that unique ideological basis of the party.