

## **Social movements of the 21st century and a question of political mandate: the case of Movement for Democratic Change - MDC (Zimbabwe) and Congress of the People – COPE (Azania / South Africa).**

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### **Abstract**

Political scene in Africa and in the Southern region of this continent in particular has been dominating media that attempts to fulfil its mandate to inform the nation as it exposes the nature of political squabbling that are taking place currently in the countries where Movement for Democratic Change - MDC and Congress of the People - COPE as social movements are formed. This article will look at some commonalities and concerns that surrounding MDC and COPE. It will also attempt to unpack some of their mandate based on their general articulation of their political agenda. However, these social movements under scrutiny are formed in 'different' countries in the same region at different times. In this case they were formed after the "attainment of liberation" song that is normally sung by many that normally thought they are free from their colonialist forces. However, in reality such liberations tends to be a fallacy in terms of the demeaning social settings in which the previously dispossessed black African majority are still exposed into and remains a wishful thinking.

### **Introduction**

Before one endeavour to much into some similarities between MDC and COPE, let's attempt to understand why they are formed and try to define terms such social movements in relation to these organisations. Although several scholars have provided an analytical definitions of social movements but still fall short of a systematic comparison between social and political phenomena. However these concepts are heterogeneous as revolutions, religious sects, political organisation, single- issue campaigns are all, on occasion are defined as social movements (Diani, 2000). Without much scouting in the discourse of social movements and their origins, one looks at what is generally considered when attempting to understand the definition and these social movements under scrutiny.

Generally, social movements are characterised by features such as being an entity that has membership, organised, sustained, 'self conscious', have identity and reason to its formation (Diani, 2000). Furthermore, social movements tend to focus on the conditions which facilitated or constrain of the occurrence of conflicts that led to their formation. They normally take the existence of potential grievances for granted without thorough inquiry. This tends to confirm what Touriane (1981) argued that social movements are a "organised collective behaviour of class actor struggling against his class adversary for the social control of historicity". Additionally, Touriane argues that since histocity is usually a system of meaning which sets prevailing rules in a given society in actual community. It will be significant also to look at the types of social movements such as the liberation and political movements.

Firstly it is worthy to note that the differences between the above mentioned movements is that liberation movement is historically linked to the family and isolation from the control of their own livelihood and fight to bring about socio-political change and self-determination in all spheres of life ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_movement)). Normally the types of social movements use

strategies such as the forceful removal of the oppressor through usage of guerrilla warfare or armed struggle. Whilst a political movement is classified as a social movement working in the area of politics and it may be organised around a single issue or set of issues, or around a set of shared concerns of a social group. Furthermore, a political movement can be formed not necessary to fight against a particular political system but for the improvement of the same system ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_movement)).

When one tries to define and understand where MDC and COPE fit in what has been highlighted above, one can conclude that these movements don't fall in the category of liberation movements but a political movement. Because these social movements were formed in different times (but were both formed at least about a decade after achievement of pseudo liberation) of the political scene but what is common to them both is that they are formed as the opposition or splinter group from a particular social movement that they were once affiliated to it. Those social movements they came from tended to be former liberation/ subjugation movements (the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front - ZANU-PF and African National Congress -ANC). Due to the manner in which they arouse, other people opt to call the formation of these movements as the anger or opportunists' social movements as they tend to be driven by these elements – anger and opportunist and after its members have enjoyed and exhausted high echelons of the movements now they are opposing. When splinter group members start to realise that their importance of their bellies and riding high is about to be over especially for their colonial masters. They jump off the gravy train and start asserting any 'unfounded' allegation to gain credibility and disguise their true intentions of securing the interests of their funding masters - philanthropies.

These tendencies are more visible in the social movements – MDC and COPE that are being scrutinised in this article. Now, let us see how this development manifests itself in MDC. For example, MDC members were part and parcel of bringing down the regime of the colonialist Smiths' Rhodesia and aftermath some members of the social movement - MDC, served and participated in the sham parliamentary democracy politics in Zimbabwe. Whilst COPE also followed almost on the same foot steps of their counterpart in Zimbabwe, as its members also were part and parcel of 'bringing down' the regime of the colonialist de Klerk and consequently some of its members, served and participated in the sham parliamentary democracy madness in South Africa.

Another very interesting development about these social movements is the time in which they were formed. When we start with Zimbabwe case, it is worthy noting that MDC was not founded when that country adopted the Lancaster Agreement that secured the interests of white colonialist masters – Europe under the tutelage of sovereign states i.e. Britain. However when the Zimbabwean government started to try to rectify the fallacy of the Lancaster Agreement, as it started reclaiming back the stolen land that is rightfully theirs. MDC started to be visible in the media and new language of regime change and the reversal of the land taken from the colonialist became the norm of the day as it is today. Again, when we look at how COPE was formed in South Africa, it followed the same pattern of Zimbabwe political scene. For example, when ANC adopted the Slovo's Sunset Clause in Kempton Park - Johannesburg during Convention for a Democratic South Africa - CODESA circus neither COPE or opposition social movements were formed to oppose this sell out deal from the colonised populace ranks. But what was more visible was that even the liberation movements like Pan African Congress of Azania - PAC and Black Consciousness Movement - BCM formations i.e. Azanian People's Organisation - AZAPO they initially boycotted the negotiation circus but they ended up demanding some crumbs as well like the ANC. The very interesting part is that after South African government also started to rectify the myths of the Sunset Clause (although is slightly different from Zimbabwe option) as it started to see that its willing buyer; willing seller misleading notion is truly a

none - starter and initiated the take over land from the colonialist settlers following Zimbabwe Option in a small scale. In addition, the South African government (under Mbeki's leadership) also saw no crisis in Zimbabwe when the sober sons and daughters of that mighty country took over what is due to them. Furthermore, just like Zimbabwe all those pseudo leaders when they realise that the interests of their colonial masters are threatened, various reasons were formulated to disguise the true agenda (to secure the colonial masters interests by any means necessary) of these social movements. Another fact about these social movements in the country – Azania, it is also worthy to highlight that other liberation/ subjugation movements i.e. PAC and AZAPO also experienced the same splinter groups within its ranks.

Just to look at another very significant development within these social movements – MDC and COPE is that they are highly favoured or loved or darlings by the colonialist's fraternities – capitals and philanthropies. This is seen through the talk left, fund right approach, which guarantees the large amount of funding and support by philanthropies being guaranteed, as these movements act as the outlets of the blood that has been accumulated over years (Barker, 2008). In view these tendencies it is vital to take note on what Barker (2008) noted that colonialist countries adopt various Counterintelligence Program - CONTELPRO strategies such as the control and manipulation of the popular protests to their advantage, as they determine which social movements or even revolutions can be regarded as success and which failed. These are counterintelligence programmes aimed to undertake, to promote and adhere to the dictatorship of the western world democracy. These social movements – MDC and COPE tends to be playing a significant role in sustaining the yoke of ignorance further subjugation of the black African world. This confirms what Barker highlighted that they are used in the promotion of dissent that is intended for the maintenance of the same old capitalist power by vicious regimes such United States of America - USA and Britain and corporate elites utilising the activities of democratic through working closely with social movements, as the means to “promote democracy” or rather polyarchy (Mthembu, 2008).

This type of development manifests itself though political programmes and policies that are adopted by these social movements under scrutiny. For example, when Robert Mugabe came to power in 1980 was seen a useful supporter of the western world elites agenda and he was showered with military aid between 1980 and 2000 with courtesy of the British government (Barker, 2008). When Mugabe started to act against the wishes of British government, Zimbabwe started to experience the destabilisation programmes intended to reverse the land redistribution gains to black African majority (Barker, 2008). In addition, MDC is committed in paying the odious debt accumulated through fraudulent structural adjustment programmes (Biti, 2008). On other hand COPE still need to be scrutinised as it parade itself as a better movement than ANC like MDC over ZANU-PF (Desai, 2008). Just to highlight some of the remarkable comments or contributions done by some founders of COPE. For example, Terror Lekota is one amongst those who are known to be against the compromising policy such as the affirmative action which is intended to attempt to redress the past injustices in the workplace . In addition, so far COPE and MDC have not yet highlighted tangible programmes on how they will differ totally from the organisations they crossed the floors from. According to some social analyst argues that the positioning of COPE suggest it “will serve the interests of . . . stratum of our society, such as big capital, the middle-class or BEE millionaires” (Desai, 2008).

In general, these social movements' – MDC and COPE policies tend not to be different from those of the organisations they came from. For example, in Zimbabwe MDC still committed in honouring: the outcome of fraudulent IMF debt, reversal of liberated land from the colonialist inheritors and consolidation of western world liberal democracy (Biti, 2008). As MDC failed to come up with a clear “better” plan that will ensure that his country – “Zimbabwe will never be a colony again” except fighting their own kind and trusting to the builders of former Rhodesian gangsters paradise like South Africa. In South Africa COPE, so far its dealings have indicated that it is following on the foot steps of the sell-out ANC mafia and as it interpret the same Freedom Charter that has been proven beyond reasonable doubt for its failing if not dismal failing the indigenes of South Africa and Africa in general and for its pro western world liberal democracy. These 21st century movements tends to reconfirm the above definition of a political movement that highlights that a political movement can be formed not necessary to fight against a particular political system but for the improvement of the same system, as they fail to declare a clear programme that will ensure the ousting of the neo-colonialists forces such as the ANC and its allies that keeps the mandate of the Berlin Conference main philosophy – divide and rule intact as ever.

These social movements tend to focus their energy on ensuring that the party they derailed to a point that their opportunities were reduced to ensure a safe floor crossing and citing evils about the gravy train they are jumping off.

This manifests itself through negative ness on programmes aimed at correcting the past injustices that tends to add to their dismally failure before the contests of taking office – electioneering. Since, so far they are not coming up with something new except repeating the same failed spineless Freedom Charter and the skeletons of Rhodesia under the tutelage of Zimbabwe that fails to capture true historicity of true liberation struggle for social justice i.e. do away with western defined political borders and liberation path for Africa and her children.

In conclusion, this type of setting within the spheres of social movements in general raises a concern especially to the black Africans who are still subjected to the yoke of landlessness, squashed in prisons and forced to sell their labour power. In view of this, one would start wondering where these social movements really get their political mandate. This concern arises because the former liberation movements such as the ANC, PAC and BCM at least were able mislead the indigenes that the land will be redistributed and free education sloganeering which they not just fail but somersaulted against those land dispossessed aspirations. Now MDC, COPE and like other defectors from PAC and BCM what is their mission or their goals, whether is to deepen democracy and socialism as it is a today's western world colonialist battle cry against the indigenes of Africa and the world in general. However, time as it did to ANC gangs and their allies and even ZANU – PF which opted to cross the floor back to sole mandate of the liberation struggle – the land to save face from judgment of time. But the time of the revolution to liberate the mighty Africa is long and testing who are the true revolutionaries and will do like wise to MDC, COPE and all other splinter groups without fail. Since the revolution is like sea waters that are able to maintain the course of time and take out the dirt as it advance in due time. The liberation for Africa will not be achieved by people with a calibre of Mandelas, Mangena, Tutus, Tshangirais and Biti, no ways!!!

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