

Paper proposal for **The Durban Moment: Revisiting, politics, Labour, youth and resistance in the 1970s**, Rhodes University, 22-24 February, 2013

Paper: Collaboration and Debate in the 'Durban Moment': Steve Biko, Richard Turner and the politics of Black Consciousness, 1970-1973

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My paper focuses on the intellectual ferment and community activism associated with the 'Durban Moment'. Between 1970 and 1973, Durban was the scene of intense intellectual exchange and debate between a wide array of progressive political movements, originating from sections of the Churches, the city's counter-culture scene and New Left-inspired campus protest at the University of Natal, and the University of Durban-Westville. This moment of intellectual ferment, whilst spanning the critical Durban Strikes of 1973, saw as well the development and refining of Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy by black student activists congregated at the University of Natal Medical School and Alan Taylor residence. The so-called 'Durban Moment,' involved city-level debates and dialogue that challenged the premises of South African liberalism, and encouraged activists to move away from party politics and engage in the politicisation of black workers. Looming large over the debates in Durban were intellectuals Steve Biko and Richard Turner, whose dialogue and intellectual labour, the paper argues, were key in framing and setting the terms of debate. The paper seeks to draw attention to their close and productive relationship, highlighting a complex synergy that was a central element of the 'Durban moment'.