

Remains of a Moment: Questioning revolution, expertise and community

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This paper thinks about various strands of activism enabled by 'The Durban Moment,' from the perspective of neighbourhoods in South Durban. What did 'the Durban Moment' mean in residential areas stuck between industrial areas that were part of the 1973 Strikes and that housed the Alan Taylor Residence, Steve Biko's de-facto headquarters during his stay in Durban? Through the lives of people in these two areas who were part of the Black Consciousness Movement, trade unions, the revived Natal Indian Congress, the political underground, the 'armed struggle,' or the organisations that would become part of UDF structures, this paper argues that 'the Durban Moment' was always a multitude of currents. However, across these currents, 'the Durban Moment' provided a shared context, a place and time that supported young people to question of a set of truths about 'revolution' and the experts necessary for it, as well as the troubled problem of organising through and against racialised communities. The various strands that emerged from this place and time dealt with this questioning in different ways. What remains of 'the Durban Moment' is therefore of much wider political significance, in post-Marikana South Africa and more generally in today's world.