



**Public Report**

**REPARATIONS FOR AFRIKAN ENSLAVEMENT:  
BEYOND NATIONAL BOUNDARIES. TOWARDS  
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITIES**

**AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR SCHOLARS, ACTIVISTS AND  
PRACTITIONERS**

**17 March 2018**

In partnership with Birmingham City University

Sponsored by a Research Networking Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under the aegis of the International Decade for People of African Descent proclaimed by the United Nations (2015–24).

‘Pioneers of our future, not prisoners of our past’ (Eric Phillips) and ‘protagonists of our present’ (Gus John)

In 2018, a call for participation was issued for the second International Network of Activists and Scholars for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR) meeting, this time at Birmingham City University (BCU) where the UK’s first Black Studies degree programme was launched in 2017.<sup>1</sup> The call outlined a brief history of the International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations, including the links between the Abuja Proclamation of 1993, which called ‘upon the international community to recognize that there is a unique and unprecedented moral debt owed to the African peoples which has Yet to be paid’, and the organization of the Birmingham Conference on Reparations (11 December 1993) under the auspices of the Africa Reparations Movement UK, which resulted in the issuing of the Birmingham Declaration (1993).<sup>2</sup>

Building from the launch of the INOSAAR in London on 21 October 2017, this second meeting focused on the need to internationalize the struggle for reparations and find ways to build solidarities across national boundaries. Our purpose was to provide a collaborative space in which academics, activists and scholar-activists could engage in discussions to challenge and stretch the movement for Afrikan reparations by identifying some of the central issues and tensions that it faces, and by determining ways in which those challenges might be overcome.

The following report has been compiled by Nicola Frith in consultation with, and with thanks to, all those who participated in this event. Its contents have been derived from sound and video recordings, all of which are freely available upon request. It aims to capture the key points and concerns raised by discussants, note-takers and attendees. Nearly seventy people were in attendance, representing a wide variety of predominantly UK-based activists and scholars with links to the Afrikan continent, the Americas and Europe, and including our special guest Dr Eric Phillips from the Guyana Reparations Committee (Caricom Reparations Commission). This meeting consisted of four sessions, including: an introductory panel with speakers from INOSAAR, Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE) and the Guyana Reparations Committee; three parallel workshop sessions addressing separate reparations-related concerns linked to internationalization; and a final discussion where we identified key recommendations relating to our future actions. It was preceded by a meeting of RepAfrika members (the youth- and student-led auxiliary branch of the INOSAAR) on 16 and 17 March 2018. The following report will detail the main content of each of those sessions and will be followed by a video documentary.

## **Welcome and Introduction**

### Libations and prayers

As agreed in Brixton (21 October 2017), this international meeting commenced with libations and prayers led by Kwame Sarpong and Rev Dr Doreen Morrison.

### Welcome address

Kehinde Andrews (Associate Professor at BCU) welcomed those assembled, noting the centrality of the concept of reparatory justice to the newly inaugurated Black Studies degree programme and the importance of having conversations focused on this subject.

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<sup>1</sup> BCU Call for Participation, [https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/call\\_for\\_participation\\_bcu\\_17\\_march\\_2018.pdf](https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/call_for_participation_bcu_17_march_2018.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Africa Reparations Movement UK, ‘Birmingham Declaration’, 1 January 1994, <https://app.box.com/s/pv9u2z5unh4gu8uoqq7ny155q53wubf5>.

## Spoken word

Isis Amlak (Global Afrikan Congress UK) presented two spoken word poems: 'Reparations Due' – a call to arms for the reparations struggle that celebrates Afrikan identity; and 'Mboka' (meaning family in Wolof) – a story of return to the Afrikan continent and of the need to reconnect to Afrikan roots.<sup>3</sup>

## Solidarity messages

Kofi Mawuli Klu (Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe, PARCOE) read out two letters of solidarity sent by the paramount chiefs of Ghana: Osfe Adza Tekpor VII, the Osie of Avatime, and Nana Kobina Nketsia V, the Omanhen of Essikado.

Osfe Adza Tekpor VII, the Osie of Avatime, wrote on behalf of the newly emergent 'Pan-African Reparatory Justice-committed body of chiefs, elders and other indigenous African community leaders', known as the 'Global African Family Reunion International Council (GAFRIC)'. The letter spoke of the huge losses experienced by those in the Avatime area during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but also of the incredible resistance and abolitionist force demonstrated by Afrikans who fought against capture and trafficking of their people. He urged the INOSAAR to contribute to the process of dispelling the 'Big Lie that Africans on the continent willingly sold their kith and kin into Chattel Enslavement [...] and should therefore take responsibility for such crimes of the *Maangamizi*'. The letter emphasizes the timely significance of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) and the value of the INOSAAR initiative, particularly its Principles of Participation (PoP), within this decade, while calling for the need to vigorously highlight 'the right of all African people throughout the World to Africa'.

Central to this campaign is the need for a 'Pan-Afrikan Reparatory Justice Law of Holistic Rematriation/Repatriation', which ought to be enacted by the appropriate legislative bodies within Afrika and across the world, wherever 'the African Diaspora makes its presence dynamically strong enough to self-determinedly win recognition for its right to Africa'. Three existing initiatives were then listed, one of which is the SANKOFAJAMAAKE Pan-African Global African Family Roots Reconnexions International Programme that seeks to reconnect Afrikans in the Diaspora to those on the continent. Finally, Osfe Adza Tekpor VII called for the INOSAAR to host further discussions on these practical initiatives with the longer-term view of collaborating at a grassroots level through the creation of 'Glocal Afrikan Reparatory Justice Action Research and Learning Community Centres'.<sup>4</sup>

Nana Kobina Nketsia V, the Omanhen of Essikado, also wrote on behalf of the GAFRIC, noting that his duty as a 'Servant of [his] people' is 'to keep our heritage'. He criticized the fact that reparations are repeatedly 'dismissed from serious public discourse'; an action that is deliberate since it is 'a concept that embodies a recollection of our experience of oppression, exploitation, cultural damage and the debasing of human dignity'. He complimented the themes outlined within the conference and noted that, if the outcomes could be achieved, this would 'make a huge contribution toward the quest to restoring human balance to the world'. He also warned against the threat of divisive politics and individualism, and against the use of oppressor's institutions and ideologies. The letter finished with the poem *Outcast* by Claude McKay and Nana Kobina Nketsia V's blessings.<sup>5</sup>

## Introduction to the INOSAAR

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<sup>3</sup> The spoken word poems can be found here:

[https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/i\\_sis\\_spoken\\_word\\_birmingham\\_2018.pdf](https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/i_sis_spoken_word_birmingham_2018.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> The full letter can be read here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/osie-adza-tekpor-vii.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> The full letter can be read here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/nana-kobina-nketsia-v.pdf>.

Joyce Hope Scott (Professor at Boston University and co-founder of the INOSAAR) thanked the Ghanaian chiefs, 'our great leaders and mentors', for their encouraging and beautiful messages. JHS also thanked those present for their attendance and all those who had helped to organize this event. She noted that, 'we are here in a sacred space, following in the footsteps of those who 25 years ago wrote the Birmingham Declaration on December 11, 1993', and asked those present to applaud that endeavour.

Following this acknowledgement, JHS outlined the meaning and purpose of 'reparations for the trans-Atlantic trafficking in Afrikan captives and subsequent enslavement, genocide, colonialism, apartheid, disenfranchisement and multiple other forms of racial discrimination and exploitation' that UK-based activists refer to as 'the *Maangamizi*' (Afrikan Holocaust). She noted that reparations represent a search that is taking place 'at the forefront of anti-racist advocacy in the world [and] particularly in the USA' and offer 'an innovative and compelling way to move beyond the inadequate and besieged civil rights discourses to revive Black-led local, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist projects, and to radically intervene in the discourse of globalization'.

The 'refocus on reparations is inseparable from the rise of globalization' and 'the philosophical and tactical brilliance of reparations [...] lies in the synthesis of moral principles and political economy. If the crimes of deprivations inflicted on Afrikan nations and Afrikan descendants over centuries have relied on strategies of demonization in the service of power, profit and conquest, then the efforts to identify, halt and redress them must insist on the explicit acknowledgement and repudiation of such strategies, alongside comprehensive material efforts to indemnify them. This reparations movement of which we are a part represents the culmination [...] of a long struggle for human rights of Afrikan descended people and sometimes their allies'.

JHS referred back to the multitude of previous contributions to the reparations struggle, noting in particular the Abuja conference (1993), which launched a global Afrikan reparations movement that led to the Durban Declaration, and has been followed by other initiatives leading up to the meeting held today. She emphasized the need to pay homage to those who came before us, 'as we take up the mantle to carry on the battle that they began', before listing the work of Ida B. Wells, W.E.B Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, William Paterson, George Padmore, Walter Rodney, Mary McLeod Bethune among others.

The 'INOSAAR has become a reality today because of all of you who are here today'. This is a 'collaboration with many individuals and other organizations in the UK, Europe, the USA, the Caribbean, South America, Asia and Afrika', and is an initiative that is 'testament to the possibility and determination of what we can do when we come together'.

JHS then provided a brief history of the INOSAAR, beginning with a conference on reparations in Brighton (where JHS and NF met) that resulted in their decision to organize an international conference in Edinburgh (2015), that was followed by a pre-colloquium held in Porto-Novo, Benin (2017, sponsored by Urbain Karim da Silva) and the inauguration of the INOSAAR in Brixton (2017). These events demonstrate 'what committed people can do transnationally'. The INOSAAR serves to benefit us all by providing a network that can 'broaden our collective understanding of reparations and reparatory justice and its many configurations, in addition to impacting positively on academic and activist working relationships'. Looking beyond Birmingham, she mentioned the forthcoming events in Senegal in April (2018) being organized by the *Mouvement International pour les Réparations* (International Movement for Reparations) in the French Caribbean and the final colloquium to be held in Porto-Novo, Benin in September 2018. She read out a translation of the recommendations that concluded the 2017 pre-colloquium in Porto-Noto, and referred those present to the INOSAAR's Principles of Participation; a document put together by INOSAAR members.<sup>6</sup> She briefly referred to our aims and objectives, before encouraging those who had not already done so to consider signing up.

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<sup>6</sup> The pre-colloquium recommendations can be found here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/en/activity/porto-novo>. The INOSAAR Principles of Participation can be found here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/about-project>.

Nicola Frith (Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and co-founder of the INOSAAR) thanked the attendees and invitees for travelling far and wide to attend. She began by referring to the recent strikes across the UK pre-92 higher-education institutions, noting that, 'We've been on strike in our institution and that has been a really important moment to stand on the picket line alongside my colleagues and newfound friends. [...] There are common themes traversing the conversations and the teach-outs: the return to free education; the strong desire for decolonizing and reparations. So if there was ever a time to be talking about something like this, it is now, when there is finally [...] a sense that we have got to do something about the establishments in which we work'. She referred back to the initial meeting in London, which focused on working through the tensions between activists and scholars, leading to a series of resolutions and suggestions,<sup>7</sup> and looked at the contents of the website where information can be found about events, membership and 'assets' (i.e. available skills and resources), and the youth- and student-led auxiliary of INOSAAR known as RepAfrika. Finally, she reminded attendees of the workshops' aims, notably the focus on 'the need to internationalize the struggle for reparations and find ways to build solidarities across national boundaries, to look at challenges, but also to find solutions. Importantly, we're looking at ways to find global legitimacy and common cause amongst ourselves and to link to other struggles for reparative justice outside of this particular battle.'

### Report from the RepAfrika

After an initial energizing exercise led by Rico Jakk (Dynamix), Simeon Stanford (PARCOE and RepAfrika) gave a report on the meeting that was held for RepAfrika members on 16 and 17 March 2018 at BCU, noting a number of points of agreement, including need to:

1. Collect the email addresses of attendees;
2. Create a vetting and registration process for anyone who would like to be active in RepAfrika;
3. Identify skills and any projects being developed by members;
4. Set an age threshold (40 and below) for RepAfrika members;
5. Use relevant communication technologies, noting that What's App does not suffice, and to be inclusive of languages other than English since RepAfrika is a multinational community;
6. Create an organization where members feel comfortable enough to introduce their children so that they can get an education beyond the state system. When the time arises, due diligence measures will be put in place to check those who are working alongside youth;
7. Locate funds to support Afrikan reparatory justice projects and create an Afrikan-friendly environment both within traditional and non-traditional academia.

Importantly, Simeon also noted that RepAfrika needs 'active participation from global Afrikan youth [...] and not until we have active participation from the global Afrikan youth from all continents can we even profess a name like RepAfrika and continue with our activities.'<sup>8</sup>

### **Opening Panel**

#### Eric Phillips (Guyana Reparations Committee)

After thanking the organizers, EP began his presentation by restating the topic of the conference, namely the need to create international solidarities with a view to helping the struggle for reparations to progress. Slavery, he noted, is not often properly defined and set within its rightful context. It tends to be viewed as 'something that happened to us', but it ought to be seen as 'the world's first nuclear

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<sup>7</sup> The London report and video documentary are available here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/en/activity/london>.

<sup>8</sup> Further details on this meeting can be found here: <https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/repafrika>.

bomb that annihilated Afrika, Afrikan culture, Afrikan family structures, Afrikan institutions, Afrikan commerce, Afrikan growth, Afrikan history, Afrikan pride and Afrikan economic development, and if we put it in this context we'll realize what we need to do to reverse it.' He continued, 'Slavery was a business and a transformative economic event in today's global economy. It transformed Europe from a feudal agrarian economy to the industrial and political superpower that platformed Europe to what it is today. Slavery was pure business; it lacked morality, it lacked humanity. Slavery was and still is the moral, social, religious, economic, health, political and financial crisis of our time, and yet we do not see it as that. And if we do not address it along each of those lines in a comprehensive, cohesive and holistic manner, we will not achieve what we seek'.

He noted that reparations is an old subject that has been reinvigorated in recent years, and that 'we are standing on the shoulder of giants who simply wanted freedom and justice'. For EP, this means that reparation must be approached as a business (just as enslavement was a commercial enterprise), meaning that there is a need to apply business principles. He also called for the need to 'create a platform of core issues and positions that nurture vertical and horizontal coherence so that there is a greater degree of alignment among the activists and academics in this struggle'. He congratulated the work of the INOSAAR, noting that this could function as precisely that platform.

Next, EP provided an overview of the work being undertaken in Guyana and the Caribbean more generally. He referred to the history of the Caricom Reparations Commission (CRC), which reports to a Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparations, as well as to the national committees.<sup>9</sup> Each committee was provided with the same terms of reference with four things to consider:

1. To prepare a *correct* narrative of indigenous genocide and Afrikan slavery;
2. To link past discrimination to today's inequality (in Guyana, fifteen state-driven reasons were identified);
3. To describe how the legacies of slavery impact us today;
4. To show how modern institutions perpetuate the legacy of enslavement, such as educational and religious systems.

He stated that Guyana was the most active of all the reparations committees, having:

- Met on a weekly basis since its creation;
- Produced the *Guyana Reparations Story* (2016);
- Published a document entitled 'Crisis' to inform parliamentarians about the need for reparative action;
- Organized twelve reparations conferences, each of which has been attended by the president of Guyana;
- Held a reparations and repatriation conference for Rastafari communities;
- Organized youth entrepreneurship conferences that have led to an accepted government proposal to create two hundred youth entrepreneurs to work within their towns and villages to create sustainable development initiatives and focus on the importance of land for generational wealth creation;
- Written extensive correspondence counteracting the strong ethnic resistance to reparations within Guyana (he stated that 'we are an ethnically divided nation with six races. And as much as Afrikans are a foundation, we have the least and no one wants to give us what is due');
- Set up a bimonthly TV programme (one for youth and one for adults);
- Ensured that national days of commemoration are focused on the related themes of recognition, justice, development;
- Presented their findings to the Guyanese Government's Land Commission to claim 18% of the land, the equating to land cleared by enslaved Afrikans. The committee is in the process of putting together an ancestral land rights bill, which they hope to get to parliament this year, but have some reservations because the focus on the CRC is on Europe, whereas in Guyana it

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<sup>9</sup> More information can be found here: <http://caricomreparations.org>.

was the state (irrespective of the country of rule) that impaired those it enslaved. He emphasized that 'there are no reparations without land', because without land to promote generational wealth creation it is not possible to heal. If their lobbying is successful, he stated that they would be inviting those from the Afrikan diaspora to come to help develop Guyana.

Returning to the key theme of the conference, EP listed nine challenges of working across borders:

1. The existence of different goals, approaches and dilemmas that need to be rectified to find a common platform;
2. The lack of any comprehensive diplomatic, political, financial, education and cultural strategies;
3. The role of the church and religion in general and its influence on the reparations movement, noting that 'slavery and religion are two sides of the same coin: both were used to destroy us'. To create unity, religion needs to be kept out of discussions. He also noted that it is not possible to heal if you are not seeing yourself reflected in the gods that you worship;
4. The lack of government commitment with only a few heads of state in the Caribbean being willing to speak boldly on reparations because of the fear of economic retaliation;
5. The need for Afrikan governments and institutions to play a role in reparatory justice, noting that 'we need the AU to get involved, we need the AU to pass a resolution about slavery being a crime against humanity. We need our heads of state to go to the UN every year and start their presentations by saying slavery was a crime against humanity and should be repaired';
6. The importance of the IDPAD as a moment in which to achieve reparatory justice, noting that if Guyana succeeds in getting land reparations, this will change the dynamics and the dialogue around reparations;
7. The need to ensure that the debate about, and process of, reparations is made explicitly relevant to daily living;
8. The development of reparations into a global youth movement (he noted the important presence of RepAfrika) by showing how reparatory justice is the key issue of our time;
9. Importantly, the need to build trust among each other and learn how to work together.

EP concluded by offering a solution to some of these problems, such as hosting a global conference on reparations to bring all of the parties together for a whole week. Its aim would be to build trust and create a common agenda and strategic plan, before inviting all the heads of state for the last two days to show them what has been agreed and engage them in the solution.

In conclusion, he stated, 'We need to have that global conference, but first of all we need to have conferences like this where different groups get clarity and coherence on what their views are so that when we come together, we come out with a common vision, shared ideas, shared views, shared responsibilities and shared benefits. We need to understand, here today and in the future, that we are pioneers of our future, not prisoners of our past. We need bold and courageous Afrikan leadership'.

Esther Stanford-Xosei (Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe, PARCOE)

ESX thanked EP for his words and for updating everyone on the situation in the Caribbean. She began by referring to the founding conference of the African Reparations Movement (ARM-UK) in 1993 led by the Bernie Grant among others, and the need 'to recognize that so much has gone before that we are forgetting', meaning that 'we are repeating steps that we have taken'. She noted that it is 25 years since the 1993 conference, which marks a period of reflection relating to the International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations (ISMAR) and the need to learn the lessons of the recent past. She questioned why initiatives that are started within conferences and meetings are not always properly

carried through, noting the importance of using the INOSAAR to hold ourselves to account by continuing to link to the past in the present and on into the future, particularly through the youth.

ESX then quoted from the Birmingham Declaration:

Accepting our responsibility and our obligation to our ancestors for ensuring that the African identity is proclaimed, maintained and developed, and that Africa is restored to its rightful place at the centre of world politics, call upon all people of African origin [...] to support the movement for reparations and join forces with a view to forming a strong, united front capable of exposing, confronting and overcoming the psychological, economic and cultural harm inflicted upon us by peoples of European origin.

While the founding of ARM was an important landmark, it was not the beginning. As her research has uncovered, the history of the movement goes back to at least 1725 in the UK. 'Throughout every generation of our struggle, throughout every phase of movement building, there has been reparations thinking and activism, and this is some of the knowledge that we have to draw from in guiding us towards what the plan must be'. This global plan was referred to as a 'pempamsie plan', an adinkra symbol meaning that we need to weave our diversity together into unity.

Next, ESX spoke about the uniqueness of the movement in the UK in terms of its pan-Afrikanist and internationalist focus, and its striving to transcend regional considerations. She noted that reparations will be 'completely meaningless without achieving the transnational project of building a pan-Afrikan Super State', also known as *Maatubuntuman*. One of the most enduring injuries experienced by Afrikan peoples is the injury of peoplehood or nationhood (as defined by the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, N'Cobra<sup>10</sup>), since those who were enslaved were, and continue to be, denied a 'geopolitical identity'. She noted that the best emancipation struggles and their leaders understood this. 'We are living in a nationalistic particularistic world, where there is an attempt to impose the universalism of other people's nationhood and peoplehood, particularly those who have colonized us.' What is important, therefore, is 'to repair the powerlessness that has been derived from the denationalization of Afrikan people'. As such, 'the struggles of the Afrikans in Guyana cannot be divorced from the struggle of the Afrikans on the continent [...] and Afrikans everywhere'. The ISMAR in the UK has therefore been focused on 'fashioning a global approach and organizing framework' capable of incorporating and harmonizing diversity.

During the second half of her talk, ESX spoke of the seven political goals of 'applied reparations'; in other words, reparations should not be seen as futuristic, but as 'a process that has already begun' and that was started by previous generations. Her research is working to identify these primary goals, which include (among others) the need to:

1. Learn about, recognize and stop the *Maangamizi* (the Kiswahili term for the Afrikan Hellocaust), including 'the horrors of enslavement, colonization, neo-colonization, recolonization and other imperialist and foreign impositions on Afrikans at home and abroad, including forced Europeanization and Arabization';
2. Counter Afrophobia 'as a manifestation of global white supremacy, racism, eradicating Afrikan dehumanization and the assertion of the Afrikan personality';
3. Restore Afrikan sovereignty by repairing our power base (i.e. through the creation of the *Maatubuntuman*, or the pan-Afrikan government of people's power), thereby ushering in a fundamental change of the existing world order that would bring about new geopolitical realities, such as the anti-imperialist, sovereign, pan-Afrikan union of communities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> N'Cobra, 'The Five Injuries of Slavery Defined', <https://www.ncobraonline.org/injuries/> (accessed 16 January 2019).

<sup>11</sup> The seven primary goals of applied reparations can be found here: [http://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/parcoe\\_political\\_goals\\_of\\_applied\\_reparations.pdf](http://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/parcoe_political_goals_of_applied_reparations.pdf).

She expanded on this last point, emphasizing that we should not just be strategizing within current political configurations, such as the African Union, but also moving towards alternative forms of unification across (the imposition of) national borders. A key example of this, in practice, is the creation of satellite communities living in the Diaspora that relate to the Afrikan motherland through the *Maatubuntujamaas* (the Afrikan Heritage Communities for National Self-Determination), which link organically to the reconfiguring of an Afrikan Super State. 'What,' she asked, 'is going to be the Afrika of the future, because the Afrika that we left is not the Afrika that is to be! Afrikan identity is a futuristic identity.' With reference to the film *Black Panther*, she stated that 'We are engaged in moving from a Wakanda fiction to a *Maatubuntuman* reality. This is history in the making!'

This vision is needed to capture our imaginations. The *Maatubuntuman* would be a 'globally super-powerful, participatory, democratic, anti-imperialist polity of *Maat*, which practices *Ubuntu* in relation to *her* people and all other members of the human family, as well as the rest of the Cosmos.' Instead of thinking about 'who we would have been, but for the *Maangamizi*, can we imagine a polity where we can all belong wherever we choose to live?' The process of return, or repatriation, requires preparation physically, mentally and spiritually, particularly in terms of shedding individualistic tendencies and rediscovering the importance of community. 'This idea of Afrika is something we are yet to create; an Afrika that we can all belong to and that we can all claim as our own.'

Echoing EP, ESX emphasized that the IDPAD offers particular opportunities, including 'the right to Afrika [...]; that is, the right to belong' and 'the right to benefit from the resources of Afrika.' The importance of this struggle for ESX lies in the need to 'build our power base' and 'stop the *Maangamizi* in our lifetime'. This will enable Afrikans to access their resources and receive their rightful inheritance. She called for 'bold thinking' and 'courageous activism that is truly about stopping that *Maangamizi*' in order to bring about this necessary global reconfiguration.

The importance of geopolitics cannot therefore be underestimated in terms of 'how are we positioning ourselves' and 'how are we going to globally governed ourselves'. She noted that while there is much thinking and analysis being developed here in the UK, there is also a need for more discussion about how to build the *Maatubuntujamaas* in other parts of the Diaspora. This kind of linking between diverse Afrikan communities is viewed as a 'civilizational challenge in terms of the kind of world that we want to create' and 'leads organically to the *Sankofahomes*' (meaning the communities that are preparing to receive the Diaspora through a process of repatriation and reintegration).

She concluded with the message that none of this can 'happen in isolation and [geographical] regions. It has to be a global thinking'. There is a need to believe that this work can be done because 'we have demonstrated in this conference that this work is already happening. It is about our power. Of course, that is premised on land, but let us not get caught up in the places where we were trafficked to whilst our continent is being taken away again.'

## **Workshops 1–3**

### Workshop 1: Working across National and International Boundaries

Fe Haslam reported from Workshop 1, which focused on the different kinds of research that individuals and organizations are conducting (whether they are activists, scholars or scholar-activists). It explored how research relating to particular localities could be connected with similar work being undertaken in other places, and on ways to build international solidarities and support networks. Examples included the genocide of the OvaHerero and Namaqua people from Namibia who are currently suing the German government for damages under the 1789 Alien Tort Statute (which allows foreign citizens to see remedies in U.S. courts for human rights violations committed outside the United States). Another example was the possibilities of incorporating Ubuntu practices into corporate social responsibility.

## Workshop 2: Creating Global Legitimacy: Winning Hearts and Minds

Stella Ezeogu reported from Workshop 2, which looked at creating global legitimacy by focusing on the different methods and vehicles that might be adopted, or are currently being used, to gain legitimacy for reparations within the international community. Her report also considered how to place the contributions and creations of scholars and activists working within the humanities — literary and visual artists, historians, musicians, theatrical performers, and others — at the centre of the reparations movement, and therefore validate their contribution. Discussions focused on existing projects (such as the 1 August Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March), the importance of decolonial education and curricula initiatives, and the need to create a succinct message that would communicate the meaning of reparations to those outside of the movement.

## Workshop 3: Connecting International Reparations Movements and Pan-Africanism

Aurora Delgado reported from Workshop 3, which focused on the ways in which reparations movements are trying to internationalize their cause and how different communities invested in reparations might learn from each other. It asked how we can establish greater links to Caribbean, Latin American, African, U.S. and Indian-based scholars and activists to draw out different national contexts and cross-cultural perspectives. Discussions focused on the importance of youth engagement and action learning, and the potential to build links based on people's existing projects.

## **Closing Session and General Discussion**

### Spoken word

Sai Murray presented three spoken words poems: 'AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGHHHH!' which represented a freedom cry against the enslavement of rampant neoliberalism; 'Reparations Song' which promoted the need to talk to begin a reparations dialogue; and 'Abolish' which called for the need to stand against the reductionism of ascribed labels and build a new future by moving beyond a 'Wakanda Fantasy' to a 'Maatubuntuman reality'.<sup>12</sup>

### General discussion

Led by Joyce Hope Scott, the following is a summary of the suggested recommendations:

1. That we consider more closely the need to communicate the message of Afrikan reparations to the wider public and the importance of raising awareness. The possibility of organizing a cultural festival or a touring exhibition was suggested, along with the need to find funds to support this. It was also suggested that we create something permanent (for example, a digital exhibition/film documentary) that could be used by reparations activists and scholars to make reparations communicable, notably to the youth. Linked to this, that we work on defining a simpler and translatable definition of reparations. Fears were expressed that the word 'reparation' itself can be confusing (or even off-putting) and lead to immediate disengagement even from those who may be potentially interested, let alone those who are not. There was some disagreement here. On the one hand, it was felt that we should not be trying to engage with those who are not interested, that we must remember the work that has been done and not to dismiss it in the name of creating a definition to suit those outside

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<sup>12</sup> The spoken word poems can be found here: [https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/sai\\_murray\\_spoken\\_word\\_birmingham\\_2018.pdf](https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/sai_murray_spoken_word_birmingham_2018.pdf).

the movement. On the other, it was felt that there is an urgent need to be able to speak truth to power by expressing succinctly what reparations means and how it can be defined simply in order to bring those that do not understand into meaningful dialogue and possibly future engagement;

2. That we consider the need to collaborate internationally to organise a week-long international conference in partnership with others, including panels on important matters such as social corporate responsibility based on the concept of Ubuntu;
3. That we publish (online) the seven recommendations and goals of reparations defined during ESX's presentation and use those seven goals as a useful framework for our collective work;<sup>13</sup>
4. That we consider the importance of identifying a global icon who can help to carry this message, for example through a reparations song that we can rally around. In terms of communication, Eric Phillips offered to make this event the subject of the next TV Programme presented by the Guyana Reparations Committee;
5. That we recognize that the urgency of youth involvement and need to think about actions that we take forwards that are youth orientated and focused;
6. That those of us in academic institutions look at funding opportunities for communities of reparations interest to explore issues relating to reparations;
7. That we promote the existence of Saturday classes, while noting the need for further resources and information-sharing, as well as the need to provide capacity within the network for members to come and deliver sessions;
8. That we consider creating an online searchable database of successful reparations strategies that have worked within and/or across national borders;
9. That we find ways to work with organic communities that already exist, such as the church;
10. That we ensure that we have sufficiently worked on the question of reparations ourselves by engaging with it individually or personally, before being able to stand up for reparations publicly;
11. That we contribute to the process of decolonizing the curriculum and in doing so challenge those institutions about how they are reproducing the inequalities of the current system;
12. That we challenge the British government's total failure to have any plans for the UN International Decade for People of African Descent!

### Closing remarks

Professor Gus John closed the event. In his address, he commented on his recent return from Washington for a meeting with over six hundred university managers and diversity officers. He stated that 'the kind of issues that they raised and the challenges they are facing have everything to do with what we are talking about here right now'. The situations in the US are not dissimilar to those in the UK in terms of the need to decolonize the curriculum and think through what that actually means not just for the African faculty staff and students, but also for the institutions themselves. He emphasized the absolute importance of challenging 'Britain as a society and all its successive governments for not attending to the legacy of empire and the way that legacy is perpetuated,' notably in educational settings. He therefore called for the need for a radical change in order to provide people with the tools to build their future, noting that this too is part of a reparative agenda. He concluded with reference to the words of Eric Phillips, who stated that we are 'Pioneers of our future, not prisoners of our past', by adding that we are also 'protagonists of our present'.

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<sup>13</sup> The seven primary goals of applied reparations can be found here: [http://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/parcoe\\_political\\_goals\\_of\\_applied\\_reparations.pdf](http://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/parcoe_political_goals_of_applied_reparations.pdf).

With thanks to all those attended and participated in the Birmingham conference.