MNM/30 Esther Stanford

Recording of an interview with Esther Stanford conducted as part of the Bernie Grant Trust project 'Marginalised No More', (2019).

Name: Esther Stanford, b.1972
Interviewer: [Marci Masaki]
Date: 26 September 2019
Location: Catford, South London
Recording Length: 02:54:36
Transcript: None available
Summary: Stanford describes her role as a juris consult and working on her PhD in history; being born in Greenwich to a Barbadian father and a Guyanese mother; reparations, African enslavement and diaspora; her role in reparations organisations, including African Reparations Movement (ARM), African Emancipation Reparations Day and Global African People's Parliament; her involvement in Extinction Rebellion Internationalist Solidarity Network; her work as a chair of an educational trust; Rastafarai; different kinds of reparations; preferring the term 'neo-colonialism' versus 'postmodernism'; reparations for Holocaust survivors; thinking about who Africans would be and what Africa would be if not for enslavement and apartheid; Bernie Grant and ARM; institutions giving back artefacts; apartheid in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe; African United Action Front; how the mainstream media portrayed reparations; the role of culture in activism; being politifcally aware even as a young child; her education, including never having a black teacher and doing her first black studies course at age 16; her involvement with the Society of Black Lawyers; her memories and experiences of Grant's role in the reparations movement including the response to his role; how she mentors younger activists; memories of her mentors; being Black and British; African liberation; African refugees coming to Britain; advice she has for the youth of today

Note: digital material is stored in the digital drive and can be consulted in the researcher's area.
APPLY TO ARCHIVIST

0:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
things that are relevant, I think to Bernie.

0:08 - Marci (Interviewer)
Right. My name is Marcy Masaki, and we're currently located in Catford area, South London. I will be conducting an interview in relation to the Bernie Grant Marginalized No More oral history project. The date is Thursday, the 26th of September, 2019 and the time is 18 past six.

0:30 - Esther (Interviewee)
Seven.

Marci (Interviewer)
Yeah. Oh, seven. Oh, sorry, so the time is 20 past 7pm. Our interviewee today has kindly accepted to take part in this project, which aims to illustrate the rich and dynamic history of black Britain over the decade 1983 to 1993. Before we start, I would like to thank you for taking part in this project and taking the time to be here today. First question is, can you please state your name and year of birth?

1:02 - Esther (Interviewee)
My name is Esther Stanford Xosei, and my year of birth is 1972.

Marci (Interviewer)
Thank you. Could you please introduce your background?

1:15 - Esther (Interviewee)
Okay, so I have a legal background. And I'm a Juris consult, which is a specialist in jurisprudence, a legal specialist in jurisprudence, which is the science and the philosophy of law. I am currently in the process of completing my PhD in history, so now developing kind of competencies in historical research, and my PhD is actually in the history of the international social movement for African reparations in the UK, which is quite relevant to the work of the late Bernie Grant MP.

2:02 - Marci (Interviewer)
How about your family background?

Esther (Interviewee)
In terms of ethnicity? Okay, so I was born here in Britain. I was born in South London, in Greenwich, and my parents, my father, who is now deceased, was born in Barbados, in a place

called St Peter, and my mother is from Guyana, Georgetown, Guyana and so, yes, so mum's still with us, so that that's my parental background. However, obviously, you know, I think the journey of identity is important, because even though my parents were born in the Caribbean, I self define as African. Mum had always told me through oral history that we were from Ghana. And a few years ago, I actually did a DNA test. And the DNA test can never really tell you exactly who you are, but the test gives the test that I did gives you kind of the 20 population groups that your DNA is most akin to. And for me, it was the Xhosa and the Zulu people so as to who I really am. That's still an open question.

3:30 - Marci (Interviewer)
Okay, thank you. We will go straight into it. So reparations? Why is there a case for reparation?

3:40 - Esther (Interviewee)
Wow, to be asked questions when I'm normally asking the questions is really quite interesting. Oh, the case for reparations is really because of the trafficking and the kidnapping and the enslavement and chattlisation of African people from the mid 1400s to the what mid 1800s largely, we know that enslavement still continues today, even for African people in particular certain countries we know, like Mali, with what they call descent based slavery based on caste. But it's that's why reparations, The Case for Reparations, is so relevant. And I'm not sure if that's the exact question that you asked me, maybe you can repeat it.

4:45 - Marci (Interviewer)
No I think that's fine. It’s just to actually set the basis of the discussion and then.

Esther (Interviewee)
Sure. Okay. So it's as a result of everything that we've been through. You know, as as an African people, we have experienced all manner of of crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, you know, crimes of aggression, every kind of crime that you can think about in terms of the most serious crimes in International Law, we have been subjected and victim, victimized by those crimes, in particular by European powers, governmental powers, state powers. So called, they call them merchants, but these were genocide as these were enslavers. These were colonizers. I mean, I think the wording that describes these people is that is really quite sanitized, but that's why there's a case for reparations. And the case for reparations is it begins with chattel enslavement, but the case actually continues in terms of the experience of African people of being colonized, not only on the continent of Africa, ie the carving up of Africa at the Berlin Conference, but also those of us in the diaspora who were subjected to colonization and even. In Europe and North America and other popular, you know, sites where we are, we have, you know, populations.

6:30 - Esther (Interviewee)
There is the notion of domestic colonization or internal colonization. So whichever way you look at it, it's, it's colonization, enslavement, chattel enslavement, colonization. And then in the so called era of independence. You know, some people use the term post colonialism. I don't like that term because I don't think it's actually accurate. So I prefer the term that was really

popularized by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, neo-colonialism. So the case for reparations also stretches to the contemporary case for reparations as a result of Neo-colonization, or Neo-colonialism, and under that come a whole host of maladies and legacies such as anti black racism and its specific form Afri-phobia, which is anti-African prejudice and discrimination. I think that's a huge legacy of chattel enslavement that still mars and, you know, negatively impacts on the lives of people of African heritage today.

7:52 - Marci (Interviewer)
Okay, so currently, are you involved with any specific organizations to pursue the case for reparations?

8:05 - Esther (Interviewee)
Yes, I am involved in several organizations, and have been over the last 20 years through which I've been a reparations activist. If I start with the contemporary organizations, I'm involved in the primary organization, which is actually a coalition, is PARCOE, the Pan Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe. I am also, I'm a co vice chair of PARCO and a co founder, as well as one of the spokespersons. I am involved with the African Emancipation Day reparations March committee of which I am also a co vice chair with responsibility for public relations, media and education, and I'm the official spokesperson of the African Emancipation Day reparations March committee, and that committee was formed in 2015 and has been organizing the annual African Emancipation Day reparations March is on the first of August each year. Not the first march, which was held in 2014 but from 2015 The march was called the African Emancipation Day, reparations March committee and the march, sorry, the committee was formed, and I've been involved with it since then. I'm involved with the Global Afrikan People's Parliament, which looks at reparations on in relation to our governance and political repairs, because the notion of reparations really being about repair.

10:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
And so the Global Afrikan People's parliament is really championing this notion of us being an African heritage community for national self determination. So we're not ethnic minorities. We are basically a nation, an oppressed nation in the diaspora. And the Global Afrikan People's Parliament is seeking to unite our people across ethnic, linguistic, so called cultural, ideological, political, religious, spiritual lines, to form one African heritage community in the diaspora that is seeking forms of autonomy, non territorial autonomy here in the diaspora, and in particular in the UK and other places, but we link territorially to our motherland. So it's a reconfiguration of sort of African identity and governance that is Pan African and looks at the need for a Pan African governance structure to unit us. So I'm a co founder of The Global Afrikan People's Parliament and part of its leadership. We call it GAPP as the acronym and part of the gap leadership facilitation team. I am a co founder and now a co facilitator of a network called INASR, the international network of scholars and activists for African reparations, and this is a network that was originally co facilitated by

12:00 - Esther (Interviewee)

Dr Nicola Frith from Professor Joyce Hope Scott from Boston University. Nicola Frith is based at the University of Edinburgh and Paco, the coalition that I am part of, were activist partners. But now, as inasr is going into a sort of second phase of our operation, I've now become part of the, if you like, decentralized leadership structure, as a co facilitator, and this is quite an important network, because what it does, it brings together a body of scholars, both based in what we refer to as establishment academia, with those who are Scholars, scholar activists, community activists, who are part of what some of us refer to as grassroots academia. So it's bringing together all the knowledge producers that you know. And this is not sterile academic theory. This is really knowledge in particular, coming from the community based organizers and activists and scholar-activists, knowledge that has been kind of crafted and generated as a result of activism, because we learn through doing, and we are, you know, seeking to find established links with those establishment scholars, Many of whom may not even be of African heritage, but are doing research that is about us and that is relevant to our struggle, and we believe and very much assert that nothing about us should be without us. And so if there are scholars producing knowledge about reparations. It that knowledge must be accountable to the movement on the ground, in particular, what some of us refer to as the international social movement for African reparations, and also the wider internationalist movement, which is everybody else who's struggling for reparations, but's not African, and that movement has been theorized by PARCO and other members of The Global African people's parliament and other people as being the people's reparations international movement. So I'm part of INASR what else I'm part of? There's so many. That's why I have to remember. I'm all a co founder of the ENOGCA. That's the acronym, and that stands for the Europe wide NGO consultative council for African reparations. And this is working with activists in Europe. We've got a base in the Netherlands in particular. And this is really an NGO structure council that brings together people who are working on reparations in a broad sense, a holistic sense,

15:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
so that we can kind of develop common strategies and ENGOCA actually is a sister sort of structure to a campaign that Paco initiated, the Pan African reparations coalition in Europe initiated called the stop the Maanggamizi, we charge genocide Ecocide campaign. Maangamizi is a key Swahili term that translates or transliterates, I should say, as like African Holocaust, and because we're always redefining ourselves as part of the repair the cognitive justice, we, you know, say Hellocaust. Some people say Hellocaust, but some all, you know, people don't always understand that. So we say African Holocaust as well, the African Holocaust, or African Hellocaust, of chattel, colonial and Neo colonial forms of enslavement, referred to as the Maangamizi. Maangamizi. And the stop the Maanggamizi campaign is a sister campaign to the African Emancipation Day reparations march committee, because the two partner, it's like a marriage, and the campaign is really what helps to drive the annual African Emancipation Day reparations march, because as part of that march, every year, we hand in the stop the Maangamizi we charge genocide, ecocide petition to number 10 down in Street, which is calling for a administrative reparations process, which is known as the APSY charge, the acronym and that stands for the all party parliamentary commission of inquiry for truth and reparatory justice, the

17:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
APSY charge, as well as something called the Ubuntu Gotla People's international tribunal for global justice, but I may be able to say something more about that later. Let me see. What else am I involved in in relation to reparations organizations? Because I'm involved in so many things. I'm also involved in the Extinction Rebellion internationalist Solidarity Network as a representative of the stop the Maangamezi campaign, and as a representative, and in fact, the coordinator general of that campaign, I've been seconded to work as part of Extinction Rebellion. And so we really are kind of an autonomous affinity group within that works alongside extinction rebellion. So we've carved out a little space the Extinction Rebellion Internationalist Solidarity Network, which has a mandate to champion a reparatory justice approach to tackling the climate and ecological emergency, and in particular, to champion the concept of planet repairs, which is an evolution of the notion of reparations, as has been shaped by African people, to recognize that the damage that has been done as a result of enslavement and colonization and now Neo colonialism,

19:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Neo liberal globalization, imperialism, etc, is not only harming us as African people, that it has harmed our planet. It has harmed our Earth, our lands, our relationship as people of the earth and a very destruct way of life, you know, especially the imposition of capitalism, which we know was very much connected with the development of enslavement of African people and indigenous peoples. So that link with the environment and the protection and defense of Mother Earth as a reparations struggle is something that we do via the extinction rebellion, internationalist Solidarity Network. And I am also gosh, if Gosh, it keeps going on, doesn't it? I am the chairperson of a Educational Trust that we have set up, and that is really working with the stop the Maangamizi campaign. And this is the MA Anga meezy Educational Trust. And the work of that trust is really to educate people about the causes and the consequences of the Maangamizi to look at how, you know, we sort of teach people about what the solutions to the Maangamizi are, by way of reparatory justice, and also to kind of really do a lot of work to sort of change hearts and minds and educate them as to the impact of the Maangamizi on systems and structures and processes of governance today.

21:00 - Marci (Interviewer)
Okay.

Esther (Interviewee)
I think that's all. I think. If I remember anything else, I'll tell you.

Marci (Interviewer)
No worries. We can always come back to them.

Esther (Interviewee)
I’m involved in lots of stuff.

21:17 - Marci (Interviewer)

Yeah, no, that,
that must keep you very busy, yeah, which is why I appreciate even more that you're taking. A time to do this interview. So you've mentioned earlier doing a PhD in history and touching on reparations, so we're looking primarily at the 80s. At that time, what have you seen through your research that is coming up about reparations? Was it a key topic at the time?

21:45 - Esther (Interviewee)
In, okay, so my research really focuses from, I'd say, 1989 to 1990 and this is really where one sees, I think, a greater amount of reparations activism. Now, there was activism in the 80s. However, I wasn't able to get much of a sense of it from the PhD that I've been doing, and one of the methodologies that I'd been using was oral history. So it was about interviewing reparations activists. Now, many of the people that I interviewed who classify themselves as being reparations activists will tell you that they've been active, you know, since the 80s. Because I do that's, in fact, one of the questions I ask, when did you begin being a reparations activist? And many of them will say, you know, from the 60s, 70s, 80s, or what have you. But in terms of organizational structures and stuff like that, there are very few. I mean, there are Pan African you see, in order to really understand the history of reparation struggle, you can't just look at reparations, or maybe organizations who have reparations in their title,

23:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
you have to really look at Black Power organizations, black nationalist organizations, Pan African organizations who would have had a reparations philosophy or ideology or even program, and reparations, you know, in a holistic sense, so not too many organizations, lots of Pan African groupings. And of course, how could I not mention Rastafari? I mean, there is definitely a presence of Rastafari in terms of the 80s and raising African consciousness about our connection to our homeland and being dispossessed of it. But of course, for many Rastas, one of the key goals that they have been seeking has been voluntary repatriation. And so when people think about reparations, they don't necessarily always think about voluntary repatriation, even though it is a form of reparations. In fact, it's a form of restitution, because obviously we were dispossessed of our homeland and our citizenship and our sense of identity and culture and belonging to our homeland. So it makes sense that an act of repair or restoration, and in particular, the remedy of restitution, would be return us to where we have been stolen from. And of course, Rastafari didn't originate the notion of reparations as restitution in terms of repatriation, but they are, I think, a group that very much epitomizes that even today, they will often tell you that what they're seeking is repatriation plus compensation

25:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
which is obviously, I think, in fact, one of the most common thought processes people have when they hear the word reparations. They actually think it's about compensation and money. And it's obviously not. It's it's a lot more than that.

25:20 - Marci (Interviewer)
So, how would you then break down the different levels on which reparations could touch on?

Esther (Interviewee)
Well as a lawyer, in terms of my legal background and knowledge, especially as human rights, I put it within two frameworks, and when I'm talking about reparations, of which I do much public advocacy and public, public law, public history around that as part of my activism and as somebody who's a reparations movement builder, I explain that there are two real kind of definitions or or frameworks around reparations. The first is the conceptual framework, which is a definition that has been advanced by somebody called Professor Chinweizu who was a contemporary in terms of the organizing of Bernie Grant and the African reparations movement, and Chinweizu, who was a Nigerian public intellectual and at the 1993 Abuja conference that Bernie went to, which resulted in founding, him co founding the African reparations movement, Chinweizu presented a paper called reparations and a new global order, a sort of, you know well, a vision of what reparations are.

27:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
And there's a very famous definition that we use in relation to the international social movement for African reparations, where he talks about reparations being about repair, holistic repairs, you know, economic repairs, cultural, social, political repairs in terms of our Inter relationships as people, repairs of our mind. And he talks about reparations being about the restoration of, you know, African dignity and pride and self determination. And you know, more important than any lands to become recovered is the opportunity that the reparations campaign offers us for the rehabilitation of black people by black people, for black people, opportunities for the rehabilitation of our minds, our material condition, our collective reputations, our cultures, our spiritual and political traditions, but first and foremost, for the rehabilitation of our minds. I'm largely paraphrasing. So that is the conceptual definition, holistic repairs, every kind of repairs, educational, institutional, technological, psychological, you know, every kind of repair. Because the who we have become and the societies that we inhabit have been harmed as a result of the experience of the Maangamizi, okay, but then, and so even with the Chinwezu definition, if you're an educator, you can see your Oh, educational repairs. Okay, I can get that. If you're a person who is into governance and political kind of you know structures when he talks about political repairs, if you feel it's about family level, you know there's, there's something you can relate to in that framework. But then the operational framework on reparations was codified in 2005 and it's the United Nations principles on a right

29:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
to a remedy and reparation for victims of humanitarian gross violations of humanitarian law and human rights law, basically, and so that framework talks about sort of five key pillars of reparations in international law. So cessation of violations is, I'm sorry, of violations, assurances and guarantees of non repetition, restitution, and basically the first one guarantees of non repetition are all the measures we put in place to ensure that what has happened to us never happens again. So like a Jewish person who's been through Jewish Holocaust says, Never again, and I believe that there will never be another Jewish Holocaust, you know, and and it's about all the structural, systemic kind of measures, military, economic, political measures you put in place to ensure that your Holocaust, your enslavement, your experience of the Maangamesi never happens again. Restitution, which is really to put a people or a group back

in the position they would have been in, but for but for chattel enslavement, but for colonization, but for Neo colonialism, but for genocide, but for Afro phobia, but for apartheid. Who would we have been? What? How would develop, would we have been? What resources would we have had? Who would we, you know, what would our sense of identity and the way we carry ourself in the world have been? And so that's where the kind of voluntary repatriation comes in. And in fact, similar to the Jewish case,

31:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
because many people talk about Jewish reparations, and the Jews got this, and this group got that, but the first act of reparations that the Jews really instituted for themselves, with the help of the European allies, was to establish a state of Israel. It was to establish a homeland. And so the notion of restitution for us. In the diaspora who are dispossessed of our homeland. The ultimate guarantees of non repetition would be for us to have restoration of our African homeland, which is currently being recolonized, and also restoration of African citizenship, you know, which would really be a global citizenship, African nationality, African culture, all our all our sacred and hallowed property, restoration of our lands and our and our mineral resources and our minds and our industries, you know, to the control of African people, not only at home, but those of us who are part of the family structure in the diaspora. So that's restitution, and it's really about restoring a people that have been dispossessed of not only their humanity, they've been dehumanized, but dispossessed of their rights, their group rights, they're they're also the human rights. What enslavement in certain jurisdictions did, especially in North America, you know, the US Constitution, it was based on us being three fifths human. And even throughout the kind of legal structures that we have in the so called west or the diaspora, the fact that we've have to have race equality laws shows us and how recent a lot of these legislation is, you know, from the 60s onwards, shows us that we haven't fully, actually recgovered, recovered a sense of parity,

33:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
if not racism, wouldn't be here. That's restitution. The next principle of reparations, under international law, there's five, as I said, is compensation, and that's what people typically think of when they think of reparations, they kind of make reparations synonymous with financial compensation. But compensation is not really just about money. Actually, compensation is about putting an economic value on harm. And that doesn't just mean economic harm, it could be cultural harm, psychological harm, and sometimes it's, it's kind of not physical. It could be about property, real estate, trade, rights, trade, justice. You know, it's really about how you, how you kind of recover lost resources, wealth and so forth, in terms of compensation. And then there is rehabilitation. And rehabilitation, I guess, is kind of self explanatory, but it's all those measures that you'd put in place to rehabilitate yourself, your family, your community, your nation. It would include access to forms of justice and justice mechanisms. For some you know, it would include social social community development, community building, community cohesion, kind of initiatives, as well as psychosocial and therapeutic interventions, especially in relation to dealing With intergenerational trauma,

35:00 - Esther (Interviewee)

post kind of colonial psychosis, of which, you know, there's been lots of theorizations by our mental health experts and professionals, and also post traumatic slave syndrome and many others. So rehabilitation is a whole range of measures that is really required when you have a community of people, a population that has been dispossessed, that has kind of lost the essence of what it means to be who they were, you know, and that's an aspect of the genocide as well. When you, not only, in fact, the the coiner of the term genocide, Doctor Raphael Lemkin, who was a Polish jurist, talks about the fact that an aspect of genocide is when you destroy the essential foundations of life for a particular group, their institutions, political, family, cultural, religious, spiritual, their community. Leadership. You know you destroy that, you subvert it. But then the as the second aspect is when you impose a more powerful. Group or a colonizing group, a dominant group's way of life, cultural norms, institutional and political frameworks and governance structures on those people. So that's the rehabilitation. And then there's, I guess, the last one. And they're not necessarily in this order, but this is the order that I've chosen to explain. It is satisfaction of all those measures that we put in place, or an affected group, a colonized group, put in place, or

37:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
advocate for and lobby for others to also assist with that really provides a degree of satisfaction that there's been some level of redress. So, you know, sometimes people refer to it as symbolic reparations. This could be apologies, commemoration days, Memorial memorials, renaming streets, putting up statutes, pulling down statues of people who were colonizers and genociders etc, etc, etc. So those, and those are just a few examples of reparations under international law. So for me, when I'm speaking to people, when I'm advocating, when I'm lobbying, and sometimes people might say, Yeah, well, I don't agree with this, or I don't think, oh, you know, compensation is too hard, but you know, it should be about this. It should be about that. So you can always it once people are not totally opposed to reparations, you can most of the time, locate what they think reparations should be within either the Chinweizu definition, conceptual sort of big picture framework or foundation, or the UN framework on reparations, because different people will resonate with different remedies, depending on how they view our history, depending on their own positionality, their own experiences, etc, etc, and their own aspirations for change and transformation.

38:41 - Marci (Interviewer)
There's a few things I want to go back to. So you've mentioned the Abuja conference. How key was it? Was it like a key, even as an internationally grouping everyone who was involved in?

38:55 - Esther (Interviewee)
Yes. It was foundational. I mean, it's one of the landmarks that I've identified in my PhD it's one of the critical landmarks of of reparations social movement building here in the UK, and the experiences of African people, of building the international social movement for African reparations. Why is it so key? It's key because at that conference, and there was like one or two kind of pre conferences before it, it brought together African people, not only from across Africa, but also in the African diaspora, on this United struggle around what we in Parcoe refer to as Pan African reparations for global justice. So the vision was extraordinary, unifying, and it's one

of the landmarks of actually now formalizing a structure that actually has reparations in the title, and that has an infrastructure. You know, if we're talking about the Abuja conference, what led to it? I'm talking now about the follow up in the UK. But the conference itself, by bringing together all these people. And of course, Bernie Grant went, and I think Lord Gifford went, accompanied him. There was other people like, I think Dr Patrick Wilmot that came, that went, you know, who was part of what then became African reparations movement. But it really was a great initiative that brought together different sections of the African heritage community globally, and it was seminal and landmark,

41:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
landmark because of it being really the first formalized I would say. I mean, although in my research, I classify many of the Pan African gatherings as reparations gatherings, but in that kind of strict kind of form. Holistic sense of a reparation structure and organization Abuja was was critical to that, because it was it there were a number of things that were also transforming our consciousness as African people in the diaspora around using this term reparations to kind of describe even our Pan African activism and sentiments and sort of ideas around how we organize trans, nationally, trans, culturally, etc, etc. So yes, I would say Abuja was extremely significant. It was a key landmark in pan africanizing or or putting in place, if you like, a basic infrastructure, because there was a group of 12 Eminent Persons, which it was quite elitist. But the notion of enslavement, colonization and Neo colonialism are what reparations are for that framing that Parcoe has adopted in terms of the Maangamizi was based largely and inspired largely by the thinking that came out of the Abuja process. And that wasn't because it was, you know, organized by this group of 12 Eminent Persons, and, you know, Chief Abiola and kind of supported by the Organization of African Unity, it was because of the African organizers who were lobbying state officials and making reparations an issue.

43:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
So there was, it was, I think one of the when, I mean, when I when we think about pan Africanism. It was one of those landmarks of Pan African struggle that I think began to dissipate after. I mean, there was another moment, a big moment for that around 2001 with the World Conference against racism, but which was kind of Pan African, but not in the same way of Abuja was. Abuja had a very Pan African ethos and mentality, and so that kind of impacted on the way in which reparations organizers around the world related to reparations, and in the UK in particular, of course, activists here include and people like Bernie took that mantle up very seriously to organize our people. And so founded, as you would know, the African reparations movement. And that in itself, the whole infrastructure of it. It was a movement that had different departments and committees, and so many of the people who were either active already, who came into ARM or who were individuals, but had particular expertise. And you know, of course, a lot of people were around because they had connections with Bernie Grant as well. So, yeah,

44:35 - Marci (Interviewer)
So how about structurally, let's say, at a European level, after this Abuja conference. How were the links, like, I would say, originally from, like, from a UK perspective, going back to the Abuja conference, where they already in touch with, like, French activists, Italian activists?

44:55 - Esther (Interviewee)
Yeah, because there were, from my understanding, you know. And of course, I think you can't sort of separate what ARM became from Bernie, the man and the and the fact that he was, you know, he'd come out the trade unions, and he had an extensive organizing background as well, and had worked with many different communities, including many different African heritage communities. And from what I know, I mean, I was, I was still quite young in 1993 I was born in like 72 so I wasn't nowhere near involved with reparations. In 1993 I became involved around the year 2000 you know, a generation after you could say, but people I do know who worked with Bernie and who were part of ARM. So, for instance, my co Vice Chair in Parcoe, Kofi Mawuli Klu, was part of arm, the legal, I think there was a legal and constitutional Committee. He was part of that. He had worked with Bernie. He had accompanied Bernie to particular meetings, especially around explaining reparations to sort of left leaning socialist organizations and groups that Bernie was involved with, and they were kind of, you know, some of them not quite understanding this sort of struggle around reparations. So what I know is that there were. Different pockets of organizers across Europe, and in my own path, I have come across, you know, a good few people, including white people in Europe, particular countries, who tell me that they knew Bernie grant, and everybody who I met that had a connection with Bernie or knew about reparations, they mention arm and they mention Abuja. So a lot was done. And of course, once you know, setting up the African reparations movement in the UK was was

47:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
also kind of like a response to something it was. It wasn't like it initiated the movement. It was really kind of like an umbrella now that that could tap into many different pillars and foundations. So people were already kind of organizing. But what I would say is, from my perspective on what I have, you know, and I'm, of course, I'm not saying I have all the truth on this, because there's a lot that I don't know, especially relying on oral history and relying on people to who were active at the time to give me an indication as to who else was organizing, you know, but what I have got a sense of is that in the UK, the sense of organization and Pan African kind of organizing is very advanced and developed, and there's a lot of it, a lot more than what we've seen in Europe. And there's a number of reasons why that that has happened. And of course, we can't discount the the linguistic side of it and the fact that many of us who had been colonized by Britain so called Anglophone, that there's a lot that gets missed out as well, because we're not necessarily I find a lot of the Anglophones, if you like, don't necessarily look at the so called Francophone experience of African colonization. So there's probably a lot that we're missing because of these European kind of ways of of carving up the world and and colonizing us according to different colonial masters. So that is an issue that also came up in my research, the notion of cognitive justice, and the fact that when

49:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
I was looking for when I first started out, and I was looking for reparations activists. I was just going in a very strict, formalistic people who had, you know, an organization that had reparations in the name, or perhaps were advocating doing speeches, you know, public kind of discourse on reparations using that word. But now I think in a much broader way about

reparations, because I've come to discover that if we're only going to restrict reparations to if you like an English sort of conceptualization of it and using that word, we're going to miss out a lot of reparations activism. So cognitive justice is key, because if you don't have a cognitive justice lens, you don't even know what you're missing. You don't even realize that somebody over there is engaged in the struggle. But they might not be using the word reparations. They might be calling it something else.

50:00 - Marci (Interviewer)
You've also mentioned restitution in some of the pillars. I want to talk about them, artifacts, yeah, what have you come across in relation to giving back artifacts in your research?

Esther (Interviewee)
Well, I know that that was one of the aims of arm UK, and there was a, you know, I know from looking through the archives the work of Bernie and others around trying to get Benin bronzes, for instance, returned. And I know there was something around the museums act and having to kind of which was quite antiquated, and having to change law. So in my personal path of being a reparations activist, I think after arms sort of folding, the focus wasn't so much on restitution of our cultural property, it moved on to other things,

51:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
but that is definitely a contingent within it, and I have come across certain kind of groupings. Say, like Rasta peoples from he's now passed deceased Ras Seymour McLean, who was part of the Ethiopian World Federation, and he was also involved in restitution of um. Some of the sacred and hallowed property that was looted in the Magdala sort of Expedition. And he is infamous for liberating books and stuff that were stolen. And in fact, there's, you know, was a TV program made about him, called the book Liberator that talks about that. So that's you know, work that he was also organizing around the same time as Bernie and others. But his work also survived the late Burnie Grant. I have come across the odd African campaigner who has kind of tried to do a bit of work around, and I wouldn't necessarily say, picking up where arm left off, because unfortunately, what I found is that a lot of modern day reparation is are not necessarily looking back on the archives of the African reparations movement, and this is one of the the the weaknesses in that there's a loss, you know, there's a lack of continuity. So what should be happening is that as reparations, we should be looking back on who were before us. What did they try and do? Because the ideas that we have, we might think that we're, you know, evolutionary and, you know, doing something that nobody's ever thought of before.

53:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
But what you find is that this is an ancient movement, and in every generation of our people's experience, there's been reparations activism from the time we were kidnapped off the shores. From a historiography perspective, reparations is ancient, and we've been struggling to repair ourselves, whether it was slave uprising, and you know, so called slave uprisings of enslaved Africans that was about, I'm going to, you know, reassert my freedom. I'm going to take my freedom back. That was a form of repair, um, those Africans who jumped aboard, you know, off ships because they would rather do that, or they, you know, than be subjected to the terror and

brutal brutality of cattle enslavement that was about from some of them. They also saw it as we're going home. We're going to go back to our homeland, even if it meant physical death in this life, because of the notion of, you know, the afterlife and African traditions around past, present and future, and we become ancestors and all of that. So, yeah, that's what I would say. I would say that there's not been too much of a specific focus. I mean, I've been involved in the odd panel discussion, the odd University sort of event that every couple of years around key commemorations, like especially around 2007 which was the British Parliamentary Abolition of the Slave Trade Act bicentenary, by commemorating the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. There were a number of universities that we were working with. Museum in Liverpool, you know, the slavery Museum in Liverpool, Maritime Museum in Greenwich, the British Museum, Science Museum, and many of them were having these discussions about their collections and kind of

55:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
recognizing that there was property, sacred property, Hallowed property, and that it didn't belong here in Europe. But there hasn't been too much, I would say, by way of an organized campaign since the, you know, the folding of ARM that has picked up, probably where that work was left. I've I've come across different even, but individuals, they tend to be individuals who are interested in this issue, even people from the communities affected, from Benin or from Nigeria, or whatever, what have you, who sort of take it upon themselves, and at minimum, they would write about it. They would do opinion pieces about it. They do commentary about it. And I know there's been some kind of initiatives around trying to get especially the said, been in bronzes returned, but it's not been very consistent, and not been, I would say, not been a highly organized feature, and that has not been a pillar of the grassroots movement for Reparations, which is the international social movement for African reparations,

56:30 - Marci (Interviewer)
Right. Thank you for touching on the Benin bronzes, which I didn't want to say, but you knew I was going there. I also, I also want to talk briefly as well, because you said how reparation is not just about money and it's not just about enslavement, it's also about what has happened after, including apartheid. So through your research into reparations, what have you seen that I touched on who all them the activism to denounce and to fight against apartheid? Have you seen any links in between the reparations bar and the anti apartheid?

57:15 - Esther (Interviewee)
Yeah because, definitely, because some of the reparations that I have, reparationists, that I've come across were anti apartheid activists, one who is involved with the movement right now. I mean, she's an elder now, somebody called Mama Lindiwe Sele, she is South African, or azanian, as she would prefer to say she used to be involved with the pan Africanist Congress of Azania. She is one of the two elders that march with us every year on the first of August. She's probably in her 80s. Yeah, and she symbolically, she's a figurehead with the other a female elder. There's a male elder called prophet Kwame, who is a Baba Shanti of the Ethiopian African international Black Congress, Black International Congress, I should say. And they hand in the petition every year. So she's an intergenerational activist, you know what I mean? So she would have been active in in the formal stage of apartheid, and since coming to the UK, who got

involved with the black struggle here, and many of the different formulations, I know that Mama Lindewe Sele actually was one of the women who was engaging with arm around the time of the launch of ARM at its conference that it held in Birmingham in December 1993 because the

59:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Birmingham declaration, I believe, is dated the first of January, 1994 so that's just one example. But then I've come across others who were loosely involved with reparations activism, but who were either South African or they were other, you know, African groupings and were in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in South Africa, and who continued reparations activism.

Marci (Interviewer)
To stay On South Africa, and how all the activism successfully led to the end of the regime, even though we could argue the situation today is not the best.

59:50 - Esther (Interviewee)
Well, I mean, okay, okay, go ahead. I'll listen to your question. That's very debatable. That apart. I mean, the formal apartheid, yes, but quite clearly, we know that. I mean, I think the ANC said it when they took power. They said, We're in government, but we're not in power. They didn't have economic power. They didn't really even have political power.

1:00:20 - Marci (Interviewer)
And my question will be, usually, when we have conversation around reparations and around those very serious issues, people would easily take South Africa as an example of it worked.

Esther (Interviewee)
And yes they do. And Mandela, yeah, why don't we have more leaders like Mandela, Nelson, Mandela, not Willie Mandela.

Marci (Interviewer)
So how, how would you, how would you see that what has been done before, and what of those things that have been achieved can be an inspiration to work on the other pillars that you've mentioned?

1:01:00 -
Well, you know, the South African struggle is, is monumental, actually, to our struggle for reparations, really, despite the weaknesses, despite the problems of the new South Africa and what we're seeing, the afro phobia that we're seeing manifest. I mean, they some people are calling it xenophobia. But how can you Africans have a fear of other Africans? It's Africa. It's nonsense to call it xenophobia, but quite clearly, South Africa's still got some problems. You know what I mean. It's still got some problems. And the South African struggle being that it's such a recent struggle in terms of the formal toppling of apartheid, formal institutionalization of it in terms of state sanctioned. So many of us can relate to that struggle. So even myself, I remember being a young girl. I think I was age 12, and they used to have at that time, there was ILYA in the London Education Authority, and there was activist people like the late Len Garrison,

who actually inspired the founding of the black cultural archives. But I remember Len was involved with something called the black writers, young black writers, competition, and I entered it at age 12, and I won a category for my age group. But it was the essay that I won, you know, in terms of what I wrote it was about South Africa, because at that time, being age 12, I was aware of apartheid. And even though I was here born in Britain, my parents were not black nationalists. My parents were not pan africanists in any sense of the word. But at 12 years old, the I'm just giving a sense of the context, the political context that would have shaped my kind of

1:03:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
political consciousness I was aware about the freedom struggle in South Africa, and so inspired by it that I wrote this article that you know, one day we would be free there. So when I think about the South African struggle and the fact what the formal apartheid, or what they talk about democracy in South Africa, 1994 that's so recent. So very recent. 1993 you've got Abuja, you've got the founding of ARM after, I believe you know, there was the fifth of May early day motion that Bernie Grant put into parliament, really based on the Abuja proclamation calling for British state to kind of support reparations. So all of this was our context around what reparations was for, or why reparations were. You know, south you can't take South Africa out of that, and Namibia, which was 1990 and then Zimbabwe as well, which was what, I think, 84 something like that, the struggle there. So it was very connected. And many of us who grew up in the oh, sorry, just looking at him, many of us who grew up who were inspired by African liberation the sense of the African liberation struggle was very strong amongst many groups in the UK. You had organizations that were flourishing around that time, like the Pan African Congress movement in the UK, and meant, you know, which had big following and

1:05:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
coming out of there was another structure that formed in the 90s. Not sure exactly late 80s and 90s, early 90s, I would say actually the African United action front, which was a coalition of Pan Africanist organizations, Uhuru movement, some of the activists, the there were groups like the all African AARP, all African People's Revolutionary Party. I always get confused with acronym. There were many other pan Africanist groupings who were part of this, a UAF African United action front. There were people like Spartacus R who is now deceased, somebody who actually, I didn't work with, but I he's a name that comes up a lot, because he was a controversial figure as well, but he was an anti apartheid activist with many others, I know members of the Nation of Islam who were anti apartheid activists. And of course, there were many kind of non African allies who were part of that struggle. So, yes, it's central because South Africa was seen as one of the last bastions, if you like, that represented African unfreedom, and it was that it was a such a strong symbol of the black struggle for us here in Britain, and we were very much in touch with the freedom struggle of African people in South Africa, and were very connected with those who we saw representing or being figureheads of that struggle,

1:07:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela.

1:07:06 - Marci (Interviewer)
How about obviously, going through research, and must have gone through speeches, press cuttings and everything. So I'm interested into how those issues would have been received at the time in the media, so mainstream, as well as community?

Esther (Interviewee)
Well, having looked through the archives I know and having you know, because I interviewed, not only did I interview Sharon Grant, I interviewed Kofi Malulu Klu and I interviewed Linda Bellos. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to interview Dorothy Kuya, who I did me and did work with in my former formative years as a reparations activist. So my sense of the media is not only from what I've seen in the archives, it's also forming a view from interviews I've done with all those people. So I think there was a mixed reaction to reparations. I know when I interviewed Linda Bellos, she spoke about her introduction to Bernie and how she got involved with arm and if you like coming, I wouldn't say coming to Bernie's assistance, but offering her assistance. After, I think, he made a comment about repatriation, and that was quite surprisingly, picked up negatively by the black press. I mean, you would expect, you know, the white press, mainstream, so called White stream press, to kind of, you know, seize on that for their far right kind of agendas. But some of the black press that was around at the time called Bernie out and

1:09:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
saw, accused him of sort of feeding into this right ring agenda that we agenda that we shouldn't be here. We should all go back, you know, that we didn't belong here. And in the, I guess 80s, if you're thinking about it, 80s, there's been all those riots, and then there's been this sense of all these inquiries, and this notion that, well, we are what second generation, I don't know. So this is, we've got to settle here. We should be kind of seen as British. So Bernie coming up with reparations, and in particular, making pronouncements on repatriation, which would have been inspired by the Rasta call for repatriation, and Rasta was quite active in the 80s, 70s, 80s, that was when Rasta was really at its height. So Bernie would have been very influenced by those movements and those kind of appeals to him, and what he would have been hearing at the community level that, yeah, going back home was something that people wanted so quite hostile press. And of course, just as just as is the case now, the media at that time didn't really understand what reparations were about, and so, I mean, you know, I came across different articles. I mean, I found, I've got one in my archives. Actually, I didn't bring it that I copied from the arm files, and it was an article about the one of the obas of Benin calling for the return of the Benin bronzes. And why Britain, if you like, had an obligation to make reparations. And this would have been, obviously, part of the whole energy that was created

1:11:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
especially around Abuja and post Abuja, and that kind of resurgence of consciousness around this struggle for reparations and that, you know what? We're on a we're on a winning agenda here, and we've got to form a united front. So that's my understanding of the press. Reception, a lot of people didn't understand the question of reparations. It would have still been a marginal issue then, amongst many of our people, in the sense of reparations hadn't moved center stage in terms of black political life in Britain, of course, the pan Africanist groups, the black nationalist

groups, of which there were quite a lot around, would have been pro reparations, but not necessarily the ordinary black person or person of African heritage who, you know, might not have understood reparations, and so that fed a lot, I think, into some of the negative perceptions of Bernie's work around reparations that he even experienced from the so called Black press. But yeah, I know that there was a lot of people who supported the agenda as well, and they tried to do what they could by by writing about it, certainly in the media. And there was all kinds of cultural productions that ARM had produced. But my sort of survey of the archives haven't gone too much into that side of things.

1:12:45 - Marci (Interviewer)
Okay, how about so, obviously, you've mentioned the various levels on which reparations should be pursued. So my question is, in your opinion, in your opinion, what should be the place of culture in activism?

1:13:08 - Esther (Interviewee)
Oh, Central. It should be central. I mean, it's not sent. I mean, at the moment you see our liberation struggle, you can't really talk about it without talking about the Cultural Revolution and the role of the cultural artisans in actually helping to produce, if you like, a new way of of seeing ourselves, a new way of projecting ourselves and envisioning who we could be in terms of pre figuring a new world, a new reality, our artists, you know, of all kinds, have been central to that. If you think about our music, you know, our resistance music, our soul music, our early our reggae music, our roots music, these were the mediums for promoting consciousness, black consciousness, African consciousness, the link to Africa, you know, a celebration and elevation of African identity, personality and culture, our art forms, our poems. I mean, one of the people I interviewed actually for my research, what you know when I think about the culture was Clarence Thompson, who was a co founder, I believe, of the West Indian servicemen's Association, and quite a well known elder in our community involved, and he's part now of a particular gallery. I can't remember the name of the gallery, but it's a gallery, an art gallery, in Brixton. But when I interviewed Clarence, he spoke about he was involved with the passage of the first race relations act in the 60s, and part of that kind of like anti racist sector that developed here in the UK.

1:15:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
But when I interviewed him, during the interview, he broke out in a poem because he brought with him to the interview an early poem that he had written, written, that he was showing me its links with reparations and the role that people like him and others who were also cultural producers and how central or integral, if you like, to our movements for change, positive change and transformation they were. So culture is key, our art forms, our visual artists, our recording artists, our performing artists. In terms of some of the plays, I know there were lots of productions, you know, in the 80s, that was one area, if you like, that we were able to have, you know, and even though, of course, the discrimination has always been there, but it was an area that we carved out. So there was a lot of black cultural production that was going on in the late 70s and the 80s into the 90s. I mean, a lot of these houses have kind of closed down, or the companies no longer exist, or what have you. But that that was a huge part of our expression,

and it was one of the areas that we could claim and and we did do it. And sometimes in a very, you know, surreptitious way in terms of being a non threatening medium for delivery and proliferation of our ideas and our visions and a way of expressing our politics in a different form.

1:16:49 - Marci (Interviewer)
Okay, I guess my next question will be, so what has triggered your activism? What was day one? What? How did day one start? Because you've mentioned 2000s that you've been involved in.

1:17:10 - Esther (Interviewee)
Okay, um, in truth, I've always been black conscious. I didn't develop my pal Africanism until later, but I was always black conscious, I would say, from a child. So being born in 72 growing up on a council estate in South East London, in Lee Green, to be precise, being the only girl in a family of five with five brothers I should say, my brothers, three older, two younger, but some of them were not born. Then, obviously when I was born, but the three older ones the context of Sus laws, them being kind of profiled. I was very aware of that, and so at age six, I decided I wanted to help my people to be free. Because I grew up in in those times, there was a lot more discussion, not only about our racialization and our experience of displacement, but class. Yeah, class was, was talked about a lot more in the black struggle than it I think it is now, unless you're, you know, because people were also influenced by forms of socialism, Marxism, communism, even a lot of our, you know, structures and movements. And of course, you then had like from the 80s, you had sort of the development of

1:19:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
afrocentrism and African centeredness. So there were kind of two camps of people, what some might classify as the black left, and then the sort of more Afrocentric, African centered, sort of activist. But for me, as I said, from age six, I knew I wanted to help my people. I was very aware that I grew, I grew up all around me, recognizing race and class and being politically. My, I didn't come from a political family, in that sense, my father, late father, I'd say he was quite a conservative, you know, even politically, although he'd not, I don't mean to conservative party. I mean in terms of his ideas. He was a royalist. You know, he was, in many respects, quite colonial, in terms of internal colonization, loved the Queen and all of that came from Barbados. So you can already get a sense of the kind of socialization my mom was more culturally centered around being a Guyanese woman and the African retentions that that our people carried through Guyana, although she didn't know they were African retentions, I discovered that later, when my own sense of African consciousness and identity grew so I but I was, I was raised, you know, in, by a mother that valued education and that taught me, you know, you have to be 10 times better than everybody else by age 11. And I can remember asking my mom I was one of those curious children at six, I'd be asking her about blackness and whiteness, and why was it this, and why was it that, and why were are people so impoverished? And by age 11, I decided I wanted to be a lawyer because I actually wanted to change the world. And I thought,

1:21:00 - Esther (Interviewee)

okay, how am I going to do it. And one of the most effective tools for changing people and the world and society was law and the other one is education. And so I wanted to do both of those, and everything I did in my. Secondary schooling, my sixth form schooling, and then my university education was with that focus in mind at age 16, going to Hilly Fields Sixth Form center in Ladywell, I set up a Black Studies course as part of the curriculum, you could do those things in those days. My teacher, Mr. Barry Jennings, who was a white man. In fact, my I never had a black teacher throughout my formal education, but my two favorite teachers, one Julian Melian was my sociology teacher, and Barry Jennings was my form tutor. Barry Jennings enabled me, through ILIYA, to get a grant to purchase Black Books for our sixth form center, and at age 16, I did my first Black Studies course. You know, I can remember that course very well by somebody called Kim Affy. And I was so inspired that I went to school. I told Barry Jennings all about it, and I said to Barry Jennings, my form tutor, that I wanted to do a class. I wanted to teach black history, Black Studies. And he ensured he wrote to ILYA, and he got it approved. Now we didn't call it black studies class. We called it cultural studies, but the content was Black Studies, and it wasn't just black people who came to the class. In fact, it ran formally as part of the curriculum for a year in the sixth form center.

1:23:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
I facilitated those classes, and a lot of the what I was learning content materials from my Black Studies course, and just general things that were out there. So we'd watch videos, there'd be discussions and all kinds of things. And people came to my class because you had a choice of either doing religious education, PE or cultural studies class. So a lot of people, instead of bunking off, they'd come in a cultural studies class. So when I think about being a reparations activist, I look back now and I realized that I was always really an activist. I think a large part of it was growing up with the mother that I have. My mum was an organizer, not only a professional woman, but very active in terms of community development, active in the disability rights sector, because I have a brother who's disabled. So I always saw my mum doing community work, always. And from when I could, you know, not only do you do work experience, but I was always doing voluntary work, yeah. And so what I'd gone to university, done all of that. And it was around, yeah, 1999 that I became formally introduced to activism, because before that, I'd just done voluntary work, community work, which was a good basis for then now taking it a step further now into really what was political activism. And for me, it started when I got involved. I mean, all my work in that time, I've always worked in the black voluntary sector, as it were. I had always, you know, done work in my community. So I am the work I'd chosen to do, even though it was, it was advocacy work.

1:25:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
So I was always working and seeing the oppression. So the mental health, working in black mental health, working with people who'd been criminalized, working with people whose children had been taken away into local authority of care, I'm already seeing the impact of oppression on my people, but not necessarily linking it in terms of slavery and colonization and Neo-colonialism. But then I can remember, you know, as I spoke about having a legal background, I was working for the Society of Black lawyers, in particular the community advice project, which was their charitable arm. And I can remember the discourse around reparations

being very topical in North America. Then America was because ARM had kind of by this time, 2000 armors folded. So a lot of the energy that was there around reparations, it kind of dissipated, because a lot was focused around Bernie Grant. And I've kind of, when I've interviewed people about this, that's what a lot of people have said. I mean, Linda Bellos actually said, well, there was nobody who had, you know Bernie's charisma, to carry it on. But I'm when I hear that, and I can see why they would say that. I mean, you know, Bernie was legendary, but there were many great people who were also around who could have continued the work of ARM despite Bernie falling ill and then eventually, you know, transitioning, yeah, so, when I was looking for how could I locate my passion for law, my passion to be part of serving my people and helping my people get justice, I was hearing very loudly the movement in America, North America,

1:27:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
and how it started for me, being based at the Society of Black lawyers, there was a conference that came up in 2001 called it, well, I can't remember what the conference call was called, but it was organized by somebody called Sam Anderson, who wrote this book, black history for beginners and many others as sort of, you know, historical historian and political activist. And he organized a reparations education and mobilization conference at City, City College in New York. And I took myself to that conference. And the reason why I took myself is because I wanted to be part of this conversation and this movement for reparations, and because America was carrying the sway. A lot of when you were doing when I was doing research, most of the scholarship, most of what you could find as a living legacy was America. I knew that was a place I had to go to connect with the movement leaders. And so I took myself to this conference. I then went back the same year to a conference that was organized by the Institute of the black world, it was called the state of the Black World Conference, and you had people there like Danny Glover, who was part of something called Trans Africa forum. And there were people like Simon Woolley actually from Operation black vote that was also there at the same time, and as a result of then going to those two conferences and also meeting up with activists in NCOBRA, the National Coalition of blacks for reparations in America in 2002 and 2001 I then kind of got introduced to the leading lights in the movement in North America. And one of my mentors in the movement was somebody called

1:29:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Queen Mother Dorothy Benton Lewis, who was a co founder of NCOBRA. She's now made transition as well. And she went to the Durban conference. And when she came via that, she came by the UK. We met up. And after that, you know, I then joined in Cobra, and I became an international rep for in Cobra in Europe, and sat on their International Affairs Commission at the same time as this was kind of happening, I met my colleague Kofi Malulu Klu when I was at the Society of Black lawyers. We co-founded PARCOE in 2000, 2001 and yeah, that's how it began for me, it was really on the basis of looking at reparations from a legal perspective, because I was located in a black lawyers organization, and at that time, you had people that you had all these hot shot Lawyers in America, Johnnie Cochran and Professor Charles Ogletree, and the Case for Reparations was being made in terms of a legal case. And as I mean, you know, a young, budding lawyer. You know, legally trained. I trained as a barrister in my I'd, you know,

done my law degree, went to university, I went to bar school. So I thought, this is where I want to use my legal skills. What better way to say, you know, to sort of help your people, help save your people, as I saw it, than through the law and being part of a legal initiative to get reparations. And that's how I saw it at the time, it was getting reparations. When I got into the movement, I learned it was a lot more.

1:31:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
But then, you know, the whole argument around compensation and the debt, you had people like Randall Robinson, who'd written this book called the debt, and it was, I was very much focused on, how do I use my legal skills to help my people get what has been taken from us. And then, as a result of meeting Kofi and us co founding Parcoe, I was introduced to the work of Chinwezu. Chinwezu's framework on reparations, which I must confess, I couldn't understand initially. It took me a long time to understand Chinweizu, and the reason why not because, I mean, his paper's beautiful. It's not hard to read. But I couldn't get his idea that reparations, the most important part of our reparation was our self repair. I couldn't get that. I couldn't marry that up with this case, this debt that Europe, America and all these colonial institutions owed our people. And we had to go after this. We had to go and get it back. We had to get back our, well, everything that was taken from us. And then Chinweizu is talking in his paper about the most important part is the camp of this campaign, is the self repair who we will be at the end of it. And he talks about we have to become thoroughly reconstructed, because the man and the woman that was made by he talks about Holocaust, you know, the Black Holocaust that was made to feel inferior, that was made to be self hating. And he talks about negrophobia, that's the word he uses in the paper. And who's kind of like the, you know, the anti semitic, you know, semite, that African, that black person, would not be suitable for a post rep, because that's what his paper's about, is looking at the post reparations world order.

1:33:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
So I really couldn't understand Chinweisu, because I was like, self repair, that's letting these people off the hook. And I want to go and make them pay. I want to I want them to be accountable. I really, Kofi would gave me this paper. He's like, read it. And I was like, This doesn't make any sense to me, because you're now trying to take away some of my fire. I want to go after these people you're telling me about self repair. It took me about a year and a half to really fully grasp the high thinking that Chimweizu has in that paper. So that's how I got involved with reparations. And from the time I've been involved, I not really, I don't, I did other things, but I'd say from 2010 I've been a full time reparations activist. I mean, before that, I was, you know, did bits and pieces of work here and there, had jobs and stuff. But from full from 2010 and to be quite honest, after getting fed up of having tribunal cases and experiencing discrimination and literally not being able to be myself in the workplace, I decided I'm not working for nobody again. So I now see my activism as a calling, as a spiritual calling, and I believe that everything that I went through in my formative years was to prepare me for the path that I am now taking. I know I'm born to do this work, ancestrally, spiritually, cult-, culturally, emotionally, I am. I was one of the ones that was called that was awoken to do this work, because, as I've already said, In my family, I've got no uncle, no aunt. There was no brother, sister,

1:35:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
cousin who was teaching me, giving me the books of, you know, schooling me in the movement. I went out and found that for myself, or the movement found me. The people found me, I should say. And from the time I got involved with the reparations movement, I was involved at a leadership level, I was involved at an international level, and I was involved at a high level. And I was a youth when I got involved with the movement, I was like 27 years old. 28 years old, I was still young, and had a hard time from some of the established activists, especially the Pan African activists, many of whom were men. And I know that I've later discovered, and more recently, in particular, I've discovered how active some of our women were in the 60s and the 70s and the 80s. I mean, I knew bits and pieces, but through my doing my PhD, I've been privileged to meet and be on a panel even of two other female historians, emerging historians who've done historical research on, you know, from like, the 60s to the 80s, the period that my PhD doesn't really cover. And I'm amazed at some of the women who they unearth that you just don't hear about anymore because they're not active, or they've kind of disappeared from public, public sight and memory. And even amongst us, this question got asked. What happened? What happened to the women? I know from speaking to Kofi, there were lots of women involved in ARM of course, there were some leading women who were part of the arm committee, people like Linda and Dorothy Kuyo, Kuya and others. But a lot of the women who were there, they're no longer visible, and those women have not been active

1:37:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
in the period of activism from 2000 so I would say my work picks up where Bernie's work left, left us. Yeah, and when I say my work, I don't mean me personally. I mean the structures that I'm part of, and in particular, PARCOE. Now, it was useful when we co founded PARCOE, because Kofi, who was a co-founder with myself and others, was part of ARM, so he was able to bring some of that continuity, some of that thinking. But even within arm, you know, interestingly enough, there were kind of different debates and tensions that came up, which I was able to unearth from my research. So there were people like Linda Bellos who, for instance, struggled with people like Kofi, who co-founded PARCOE, because she told me in her interview and she said that, you know, people like Kofi were too. She didn't feel that they were, I guess the word maybe that we could use now is centrist enough, and that their ideas, which were really about the pan, we need to have a Pan African revolution. You know that those were not ideas that people like her father and the average black person could endorse or relate to. And so I remember when I interviewed Kofi, and I said to him, you know, this is what Linda said in her interview, you know, that you were calling for a revolution. And he was like, yes, yes, we were, you know, so he was very open about some of those political differences, even though people were together in ARM, he was giving an insight into from the bottom up, perhaps, why it also fell apart, because there were and his view, and you know, from my speaking to Dorothy Kuya, speaking to Linda, who were also active

1:39:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
a lot was centered around Bernie. And it wasn't because Bernie made himself this, you know, he was addicted, you know, it wasn't nothing like that. It was because of who Bernie was. And of course, because of his location, he was an MP, his positionality, a lot of people deferred to that.

A lot of people came around him because of who he was and when things were now left for them to kind of take agency and continue. They didn't feel able, even though I'm sure many of them must have been capable. So then we get into the different ideas and ideologies that people had and different notions of what would hold it together. There were some who saw this is from the interview with Kofi. There were some who saw reparations in a very fashionable way, but were not really down for the struggle, and were not down for what would they would have to sacrifice to truly identify with reparations. And there were those that were mesmerized with Bernie being an MP and kind of the doors that that would open, and the kind of connections that Bernie had access to and and the kind of functions and even some of the resourcing that came, you know, because we had a black voluntary sector then, a community centre that was emerging as well around that time. So there was a lot in it for different people. So there were many different kind of reasons that draw people to arm. There were, of course, a section of people that stayed outside of arm totally. And some of those were some of the pan africanists. There was some, from what I've heard, that there was also some who didn't embrace Bernie in our community. They didn't think that reparations could be led by somebody who was,

1:41:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
you know, an MP in Babylon system, as it were. And that wasn't kind of a even though Bernie was definitely a people's man and the people's politician and very well respected, there were still those tensions in terms of the class struggle amongst us and perceptions of who Bernie was, and of course, it has to be said because Bernie had married Sharon, that also came up as an issue in some of the conversations I've had with people who were involved with ARM and how perceptions around that. So some people stayed away just because of that. You know, Bernie had this white wife. So, yeah, there was a whole mixture of reasons, and I think I've touched on some of the key ones that people have shared with me in terms of my assessment of the situation. Yeah, but why I say my work picks up from Bernie's work is that I actually met Bernie grant once, I believe once, I don't. Maybe there was more times, but we didn't meet in a way that there was any real conversation between us. And I tell you the context I can remember that there's an organization called the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust, led by somebody called Sybil Phoenix, who is, I think she was the first black woman in this country to get an MBE from the queen. She's a Guyanese. She's local. She has a home the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust in Brockley, which is local to where we are. And being a Guyanese, fellow Guyanese with Bernie, she used to have a lot of fundraising dinners and events to raise money for the trust, and she organized something from the Trust.

1:43:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
I remember it being a dinner, and I remember Bernie being there, and I can remember sitting on the table, if you like, adjacent to where he was. I'm sure we had a brief conversation like, hello, you're Bernie Grant, you're this MP and but there was no real kind of conversation with him. I know that during the time that ARM was still nominally kind of alive, certainly in terms of the archives, before they'd gone into Bishopsgate, I went to see and it was via, it would have been via Sharon, I'm sure at the chambers, Devonshire chambers, I believe it is where his old office. I went and looked through some of the files when I was kind of an early researcher on this. But the key thing that I think links the work that I'm now doing with Bernie Grant that, I, I'm quite

proud of, and I think is a landmark in my political activism. Was in 2003, I was involved with initiating a UK lawsuit against Queen Elizabeth, the second for reparations, using the Chinweizu definition of reparations by we didn't have the UN framework. Then that came in 2005 but in 2003 we and this was under the auspices of an organization which no longer exists in that form now, but is part of, you know, was one of the founder groups of PARCOE, the black quest for justice campaign, and on 10 years To the day that Bernie did his early day motion in Parliament after coming back from the Abuja conference on the fifth of May. That was fifth of May, 1993

1:45:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
on the fifth of May, we initiated this Pan African legal and extra legal action to sue. Or when I say Sue, what I mean is to hold to account Queen Elizabeth, the second in the British state for crimes against humanity and the trafficking in enslavement and colonization of African people. And we chose this state symbolically in honor of Bernie Grant and the early day motion. And so I have here, you know, because I was looking, this is from April the seventh, 2003 in the voice. And there's a clipping here that's talking about Bernie Grant. It's got a picture of Bernie grant. The PIC, the famous picture where he's dressed in his African, you know, garms for members only, standing outside Parliament. It says reparations group to sue the Queen, a lawsuit against the Queen and Prime Minister Tony Blair is to be filed on May the sixth, 10 years after the late Bernie grant submitted an unsuccessful early day motion for African slavery reparations to Parliament. Grant's historic motion in 1993 called for the international community to recognize the unprecedented moral debts owed to African people, and urged all countries who had been enriched by enslavement and colonization, to review the Case for Reparations. He also actively lobbied the British Museum for the return of price to spend in treasures looted by the British in 1897 and urged the government to support resettlement schemes for African Caribbean people for wishing to return home after attending the Abuja conference for reparations in Nigeria, 1993 he founded the UK arm of the movement, Esther Stanford,

1:47:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
legal adviser to the black quest for justice campaign, and European representative for the reparations for global Africa Congress, in fact, in. It was called The Global African Congress. The organization still exists, but I didn't mention it because I'm no longer part of it. But at this time, I was and it says, told the voice “Bernie made a significant contribution”. This is me being quoted “to the reparations movement and used his position as an MP to support one of the most definitive issues of our time. Since his passing, nothing has happened. It has become clear that none of the other black MPs will take up the issue like Bernie did. He stuck his neck out for a cause he believed in. Last July, the campaign group sent a letter of intent to the Queen and Tony Blair informing them of the prosperous, prospective, sorry lawsuit, but receive no reply, it will now proceed with legal action.” And then. This is from July the 22nd 2002 and you can see this is actually a copy of a voice newspaper article, and it's got a picture of Bernie Grant, and again, it's talking about this prospective legal action. Bernie is central to that, it talks about us writing to the Queen. The group also has plans for a special forum to be established, the People's international tribunal, which I mentioned earlier my intro to bring about Pan African reparations and to prosecute companies and politicians. Black quest for Justice's threat of legal action was relayed to the Queen on her Jubilee, June the second, and it talks about who you

know black quest for justice campaign is it? Then quotes Peter Herbert, who was as chair of the Society of Black lawyers,

1:49:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
and then it quotes Kofi Malulu Klu, who talks on behalf of the black quest for justice. And I'm also quoted in this article as well. So all of this was press that was sort of, you know, promoting and making people aware that we were going to be taking this legal action, which we did in 2003 and the response we got back. So what we were trying to do in 2001 there was the World Conference against racism that took place in Durban, South Africa. And at that conference, it was declared that slavery was a crime against humanity, as should always have been so. Now there are no there's no statute of limitations on crimes against humanity. So what we were seeking to do as the black quest for justice campaign. And we were under a lot of pressure from our communities, because our communities were seeing what was happening in America. They were seeing all these lawyers, you know, if you like, initiating these legal strategies and lawsuits, and it's kind of like what's happening here. We're not doing anything. So even though we knew that the lawsuit wouldn't succeed, we did it as an educational thing, you know, to educate people about the law, to educate people about power, to educate people that it isn't about right and wrong and morality. It's about have you got the power to compel the British state and the other European powers to do the right thing, essentially. So in order to do that, and to do the teaching, it was a teach-in, was we tried to trigger the prosecutorial powers of the Attorney General for crimes against humanity. And this was taken the Durban lead that slavery was a crime against humanity. So we're like,

1:51:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Okay, so we're going to look at, how does Britain prosecute crimes against humanity? And it is through the, you know, the International Criminal Courts, act of 2001 so what we had to do is we had to appeal or apply, and this was a Letter Before Action, as it were, to the Attorney General to trigger their power to trigger an investigation of Queen Elizabeth The Second for crimes against humanity. Now bearing in mind that these are appointees of Her Majesty's Government. You know, they ain't gonna do that, but if we were to follow the strict letter of the law, that's really what would have to happen. And the response we got back from the Attorney General's Office, think it was Lord Goldsmith, QC, at the time, was Queen Elizabeth, the second is sovereign. She's immune from prosecution, and the British state doesn't recognize crimes against humanity committed before 2001 and the introduction of the International Criminal Courts act. But if we can show that there are crimes against humanity that are being committed today, we should go to our local police station and report them. That was the response that we got, and that was all the response that we needed to get, because we knew then that a strict, conventional legal action would never work. And then we moved into the realm of social movement building, social justice lawyering, which is where lawyers basically lend their legal skills and competencies in service of movements, and the movement then becomes really the political struggle. And everything I've done since then has been, you know, building on that. So we do have a political parliamentary an extra parliamentary strategy,

1:53:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
which is calling for an all party parliamentary commission of inquiry for truth and reparatory justice by a way of the stop the Maangamizi campaign, but that we couldn't get to that place without doing the conventional legal route, because a lot of lawyers, even, you know, ambulance chasing lawyers, were seeing this as an opportunity, a very profitable opportunity, to make some money. I mean, not a lot, but there were some out there like that, and that's not what we wanted. You know, we wanted this to truly be a people's case, and then being somebody who really is into what's called critical legal practice, I realized that you can't really take a case like this and narrow it down to a conventional legal strategy where you've got the lawyer as experts going in a court that excludes the people and their case and tries to go and win some hot shot settlement for us, it just wasn't going to work, whereas the strategy we have now, if it's ever to succeed, is far more participatory. You know, has much more public involvement. Can involve people living, people who would be classified as victims for the purposes of law, meaning that they have a right to claim a remedy, a right to reparation, a right to be repaired. So ca-, we're in the process of developing case studies of people who would appear before this commission of inquiry to talk about how the legacies of slavery have impacted on their family, line, their them personally, their, you know, their communities, etc. So yes, that that's what led me to all of this and and I've done lots of stuff, groundbreaking, breaking stuff, and I would say

1:55:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
that even in terms of the work that we're doing now, even though we don't have the profile necessarily as grassroots activists that Bernie and ARM would have had at that time, what we have been able to do, something that ARM never was able to do, and that's why I think that we are an evolution, but there are still some things that we haven't been able to replicate that arm had, and one of those things was the infrastructure okay? And that came together for a number of reasons, and we had more of a sense of a community, black community, African heritage community then, and so people were more willing to lend, if you like, their skills and their services in support of this movement, there was a lot more collectivity nowadays. You know, there's a kind of corporatism that has seeped in, and people are not so down with kind of the sacrifice of this collective struggle. Now, there's been much more of a professionalization, and many people see themselves as just professionals and, oh, the way we're going to, if you like, get out of this mess, is to just all be very educated, or all have businesses or or what have you. So even that, I mean, Bernie had socialist politics. You know, that sense of a socialist or even communitarian politics is not the same as it was in the 70s and the 80s and the 90s. In particular, the sense of community, even amongst African centered people, is about cultural forms of cultural nationalism, which doesn't necessarily deal with our political place and status in this country and challenging the state and structures of domination and oppression.

1:57:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
It is about, if you like, carving out spaces which they might see as free spaces or liberated spaces, where we can be African we can be ourselves, but yet you can be yourself in our Kwanzas and our African liberation days, but when we go out into the wider world, which is where most people kind of live and all have to work or their children go to school, we have

another reality. So that hasn't provided all the answers either. And I think what does provide the answers is to take the best from all of what our people have produced. So what I would say in terms of our work in the movement now, and certainly I know that I have been, I have become, and I believe to some degree, I am recognized as a visible leader or leading activist after the folding of ARM and Bernie's work, I'm one of the key people that is there and has been a consistent voice and face and organizer, but at a grassroots level, and even though I'm grassroots, I'm quite intelligent, I have a good skills base, I have a legal background, you know, I'm not what might be the stereotypical perception, you know, from a class perspective, of what a grassroots activist is, because I've committed a degree of class suicide myself. So I think I've been able with others that I work with, but I because I've always done media and always been a spokesperson, I become a person that is visible, okay, but I work as part. I always work as part of collective. So it's not just me, but I would be the one whose name might get called or people might recognize because of that,

1:59:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
and what I would say I've added or contributed to that legacy that Bernie has left is really make trying to make this movement participatory and within reach of an all the ordinary person. So it's not about relying on a Black MP to push this agenda for us. I mean, don't get me wrong, that's still required, even in terms of the strategy that we have around the parliamentary commission of inquiry. It does require MPs or people to champion it. And of course, being that they'd be MPs, they're the ones who can push it, to take it to the next level. But the idea comes from the people. That's the difference. So it's not top down, it's not elitist, it's not based around me being a charismatic leader. Do you know what I mean? It's based on inculcating in people personal responsibility. And that actually, who do you think is going to go out there, even if you think reparations is about money and compensation, who do you think is going to go out there and get it for you? You have to be part of this struggle. That's why we march. And the march is not a middle class black people's march, in terms of it being organized by them. A lot of our professional class stay away from the struggle. They stay away from grassroots movements because they're professional. They, you know, maybe they think that they're clever, or that, you know, we're stupid or something I don't know, but the movement has, because it's been grassroots led, and partly, I would say, because many of those who were differently positioned have abdicated on their responsibility to carry on the struggle. And Bernie passing was not an excuse to then stop organizing. That's how I see it.

2:01:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
And actually, I feel quite let down, if truth be told, in terms of some of those who went before me, because I can remember being a young organizer in my 20s who had nobody around her. There was none of the elders, which is what I now do when I see young people coming up in the movement that I'm part of, yeah, you might think, God, you're a bit of an upstart. And, you know, you might have even a sense of what's the word protectiveness, because, you know, you've carved out a space, but I'm encouraged and inspired and try and reach out. And I think to myself, come on, there must have been people who saw the work that some of us were doing, who saw the connections we were making to ARM and not just to Bernie, even some of the other leading people. You must have known this. You must have seen it. Why did you ignore it?

And is it the responsibility of the younger ones to go and find the elders, or is it the responsibility of the elders to go and find the youngers, or to even call them to account and say, Hang on a minute. You're doing this. But did you know that we've been doing. this a long time, and we were before you? Whose job is it? I'm not here to lead the elders. The elders are there to kind of lead us, and to to kind of be the figureheads of our village and to be the the custodians of our heritage, including our heritage of struggle. But I would say that I've had very little of that, and it's not because I'm not willing or uppity. I mean, you know, there's been very few black elders in this country who have been part of that earlier generation of struggle, who have really related, or made any effort to relate to the content. So I think there's an issue there in terms of the intergenerationality of what we're doing.

2:03:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
There's a problem because a lot of people like not necessarily that they stop being active. People find different ways to be active, right? That it, you know, it might not be armed, but they might still be publishing. They might still be doing something that they were doing that connected them to ARM but, yeah, it's been difficult because some of us have felt kind of abandoned, and there hasn't been that receptivity to innovation, to even new ideas and to if you like, doing things that perhaps they were not able to do in that time. Because every time you know, there are different, maybe priorities, or there may be different focuses on the people. What will gravitate the you know, what the people will gravitate to. And one of the things that I sort of analyze is when I mentioned this sort of tension between some of the older activists who I would, you know, perhaps classify as black leftists who were inspired by socialism, you know, Marxism, communism. And then there was a brand of activists who, some of them who had been through those structures and then got influenced by afrocentrism and African centeredness. So the struggle moved on in a different direction. It didn't mean that that struggle for power and for self determination and for land and, you know, get rid of capitalism. And, you know, it didn't mean that that wasn't important, but we needed to have a fusion between the two. And that didn't happen. Because I think some of those who went off into cultural nationalism, those who saw themselves as struggling for power, maybe didn't quite identify and were not as African centered. So even though they were progressive, they were not as interested in rediscovering African culture,

2:05:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
African identity, as what some of these cultural nationalists so called, and what became of Pan African groupings. Yeah, who it was very much about. We have to become African again and not just be black white people, you know. So, I mean, that's just my reasoning and my assessment of it. I don't know how accurate it is, but it's what I've deduced from speaking and seeing what I think the camps are. So there are some elders who are part of that generation, like, say, people like your Gus Johns, who I have related to, but he's one of the few that has had the Yeah. And I think the humility works both ways. You know, there is this thing about we have to have humility, and you do learn that as an activist. But I don't think it's just about the youth having humility before the elders. I think the elders also have to have some humility too. You know, I mean, that might sound cheeky, but in terms of the intergenerational struggle, because if you as an elder, think that you've done it all, and you were the most revolutionary, and you don't

see that there are these new sprinklings, and there are these new buds who have been birthed in a different time and have different gifts to offer this movement, even to carry on your work, and who, if you build links with them, if you reach out to them and if you show them your warmth, they will naturally want to continue and want to credit you, because they would have been so grateful and so inspired by your narratives, your stories, your heritage of struggle, that that couldn't only become part of theirs. When I think about Dorothy, who's now passed, God bless her and God rest her soul.

2:07:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Dorothy was my female mentor. I had male mentors, but they were not elders, and to this day, I miss Dorothy, but Dorothy was humble. I can remember, I was a young person. I mean, Dorothy had been in the movement, like 40 years she and not only Dorothy, there were others I met in the US movement from like the Republic of New Africa and Black Panthers and black liberation and Black Liberation Army and all these kind of, you know, black power and radical groups that were part of the black, the black radical tradition in America, and a lot of the elders, I just feel so blessed that I met because a lot of them in the last 10, 15, years have passed, and when I, when I write my life story, I some of these elders and their journeys will be part of mine. My story, because I met them, I organized with them, I sat down at their feet and talked to them. They told me the stories that as a younger activist gives me a sense of pride and a sense of historical continuity. Yeah, and especially people like Dorothy Benton Lewis, who traveled with me. I invited Dorothy on some of the trips that you know certain places like I'm the person who inspired Dorothy to go to Israel and visit the African Hebrew Israelites. This is an elder to me, but because I had a connection with the community, and was able to say to her, no, look, it's okay, you know, despite what we hear about that Israel Palestinian conflict, we can go there, you know. And Dorothy went there twice, so you can have that learning across generations and that sharing. And one of the things Dorothy used to say. I mean, Dorothy and I used to travel together as a younger activist who was struggling, didn't have much money.

2:09:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
Dorothy would share rooms with me, put me up. I could stay in her house. She would be looking out for me. That's what's needed, especially when you are a woman and you are one of the few that's in this field in this time, because, as I said, the women who were active in the 80s or in the 90s went to sleep by the 2000s. They were no longer there. And maybe they saw themselves as being active, but they were not active in a visible way, in terms of, you know, community based activism. They would have been part of their established networks, maybe doing the usual things that they always did, but activism moves on, new structures, new ways of organizing, and new ideas come up, and we have to constantly stay on the ball. And Dorothy Benton Lewis is somebody who did that for me, and I will forever be indebted to her for the mark that she has made on my life. And when I speak about who I am, I don't talk about my creation story and my evolution story as a reparations activist without her. Do you see what I'm saying? But I didn't have that in the UK so much and maybe had Dorothy Kuya survived, she was another sister that I had connected with. I went looking for her because I knew who she was, and I stayed in Dorothy's house as well. Dorothy lent me books. We met up on various times. We stayed in touch minimally. And it was so unfortunate that when it came to now me doing this PhD and

wanting to record her life, she'd passed, and that's what's happening. And that's such a loss, because Dorothy was a very interesting woman and a very interesting background, and yes,

2:11:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
some of the the history that that she told me, you know, I will forever be kind of like enamored of, Wow, you did these things, and now I'm a younger activist, not walking the same path that you walked, but part of the same movement, but your path was important to even my path. So yeah, that's what I would say needs to that's one of the weaknesses, the solidarity, the unity, especially amongst women activists. I think that's particularly needed, because our movement is still very patriarchal, and the women are there, but they tend to be in service roles, like they're organizing the meetings, they're doing, administrating the meetings they're cooking, they're doing the kind of bridge building leadership. They're making the connections. They're making things happen, but the men are the ones who are the spokespersons and who are the ones who are visible and who talk the loudest. So there's definitely a gender issue in the movement, and I don't know if it's got worse or it's got better from women who were active in the 80s and the early 90s. I mean, I know some women activists who sort of say they think that things have got worse, but I'm not sure, because also what was going on in the 80s is you had black women's movement in Britain as well, inspired by the feminist movement, you know. And of course, black women have made their clay, and they've shaped and they've transformed these movements. So there was quite a strong, you know, when I have met older women activists like, you know, Althea Lecointe I think her name is, Lecointe, from the Black Panther Party.

2:13:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
She had a very kind of feminist or womanist perspective that's not so evolved now amongst the women that I work with in the reparations movement, because a lot of those women, they are more what I'd call African centered, Pan Africanist, and there's a rejection of what they see is feminism on white woman's feminism. So that tension has and maybe because we've had some learning now from the movements of the 80s, we've been able to see what happened, and it's been seen. And, you know, many progressive women who are intelligent, you know, and on many other respects, but the the sense of gender consciousness, and I think this, not wanting to further divide our families and communities, knowing the oppression that a lot of our men are under and our sons and, you know, daughters do get neglected quite a bit still, but, but there isn't this tendency to kind of self identify in the way that maybe a lot of older women activists were quite comfortable with identify who were active. You know, as as we're part of the women's movement, we had a black women's movement, but we don't really have a black women's movement now. And those that may you know, there's been other things. You've got womanism, and, you know, so and there's more really a focus on our whole community and our family, and we need to restore that. We don't need to have a woman's movement that's going to alienate us from our men, because we're, you know, we already got problems. We got a lot of our men in prison. A lot of our families are broken. There's a lot of single women, you know, lots of single, so called parent households. So a lot of even ordinary women are not really relating to feminism

2:15:00 - Esther (Interviewee)

in that obvious way. It tends to be a particular class of black woman that is formally educated, professional in terms of a profession and has a sort of, you know, even in some instances, economic independence or self sufficiency, those tends to be the women who I've come across who more identify with that. But a lot of our other sisters know that. You know their mothers and they are, their whole thing is family first, or our children, or whatever it may be. I don't know why I went into that area, but I think I was just reflecting on some of the changes that I've that may have been.

2:15:50 - Marci (Interviewer)
I think, it's, it's a good, it's a good transition. So maybe two more questions?

Esther (Interviewee)
Sure.

Marci (Interviewer)
So the last one will relate to what you just said. The one in between is, how about how you see now the connections with Continental Africans, diaspora and everyone working together. Because in the same way that you've just described all of these tensions around gender as well, there's also some, sometimes a disconnect between the interest of those on the continent leaving it?

2:16:23 - Esther (Interviewee)
I think there is more of a disconnect now. I think now I can't really say because I wasn't active in the 80s, I can't really, but why, why, I say I think there's more of a disconnect now? Is that because I believe, and from what I've heard from a whole range of activists, you see, in the 80s, we still had a connection to Africa. As a di- I'm considered a diaspora in Africa, there was still a connection, even though, even people who may have seen themselves as black and in Britain and not really see themselves as black British,

2:17:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
because that's a kind of more recent formulation, they knew they came from the Caribbean. We were called Afro-Caribbean people for a start. So it was in the term, even though we're not Afro people. You know that was the hairstyle, but that was part of trying to kind of identify us with our homeland, Africa. Now, even by Census definitions, you're black British, or you're black Caribbean, or you're black African, or you're black other, and then this term BME, so our people who are of African descent, largely are more alienated from Africa. They're more alienated even from the Caribbean, which was a closer step to Africa for us. And I think why people who were interested in change from whatever, whether they were cultural nationalists, and it was about the cultural revolution and Pan African culture and elevation of knowledges, or whether you were a black Marxist, or whatever, people who were interested in doing something to change our reality, they would have had more of a connection with the African liberation struggle, because, as we mentioned earlier, we had the struggle in terms of apartheid, we had Namibia, we had Zimbabwe, and we who were people of the diaspora and saw those as our struggles too, like I spoke about my formative years, you know, writing the young black writers, winning

that section of the young black writers competition where I wrote about South Africa. I'm born in, you know, South London. What do I know about South Africa? But yeah, I could write about it, because that was they were my people. I don't think that connection is as much there now. And whilst there are more probably Africa, much more African continental diversity and co- different communities here now, the difference is a lot of those people have come from

2:19:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
so called independent countries where a lot of them are running away from what they see as bad governance, okay, or they're in search of a better life. And you know what? And to get a better life, you leave the politics, you know, or they're they're refugees. They're seeking asylum because of political repression. So the dream, if you like, of independence and freedom and what it would mean for us to have now countries that and governments that we could rule. And that dream has kind of, you know, been this bubble that's been burst. And so a lot of what I hear, even from activist sections, or what might be considered black conscious and people who would even say they're African, and say from the diaspora, who think they're more African than Africans from the continent. What I hear a lot is, of is there's a lot of tensions that come up because the a lot of the Africans who they tend to meet are the ones who don't want nothing to do with politics. They just come here to they're working. They want to earn their money, keep their head down, and all this rabble rousing stuff. And actually, why are you complaining you're in Britain, you know you're in a good place. You don't know where we've come from and what we're escaping, and you have all these things at your disposal, and don't you appreciate what you have? So there's tension between us, because a lot of the conflicts come up because the Africans from the diaspora who think they're more Africans from the continent, what they're seeing is or who they're meeting, they're not meeting the Africans who, who I hear people met in the 70s and the 80s, who were those in exile, who were part of liberation movements back home, who were here organizing for the liberation struggle, who were making the connections with the Pan African groups. It's not those kind of Africans they're meeting.

2:21:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
They're meeting the ones who don't want to even stand up for Africa. Okay, so I think it's it's got worse. And what's also happened is that there's been a lot of social engineering to tell us that we're black British, and therefore, if you believe you're black British, you have no need to look to Africa or even the Caribbean. If that's where you is a more immediate connection, because you believe you're and so there's been far more, especially of you see, because in the 80s, there was all the riots, people knew they were not British. In really, they knew they were second class citizens. They could feel the alienation on the streets. We wouldn't. We didn't have access to the institutions. There wasn't huge funding that had now been plowed into our communities and created a black misleadership class that a lot of them basically appropriate. You know, not a lot, but there are lots of stories about resources that went to, who they went to, and and all these institutions that we had shops and can. Community buildings that have been lost. We don't have that now. So even the younger ones who are here now, if you don't tell them this history, even of what happened in the 80s, they have no idea it existed, none at all. The other day, I was somewhere, and I went and some and I was talking about something, the person that they didn't even know who Bernie Grant was. Shocking. Shocking. How could you not know who Bernie

Grant was? But this is the level of illiteracy, political illiteracy, a dumbing down, you know? So in that 70s and 80s in particular, there was a lot of consciousness raising, a lot of political education that was going on. People were identifying with struggles, even if they were not about Africa. They were struggles of like oppressed peoples in other parts,

2:23:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
it was a lot of internationalism. There was a lot of knowledge exchange across learning from different, you know, social movements and struggles. Now, there's more a tendency for people to stick in their little community. Even communities of that have come from the Caribbean. I'm a Jamaican, I'm a this, I'm a that, I'm a Ghanaian, I'm a Nigerian, and and, you know, sticking to our own little groups. It's no longer about as African people. We've got a common struggle that's being waged on different fronts, and that is for African liberation. Because even African leaders will tell us that they're liberated. We no longer have the organization for African Unity. We have the, you know, African Union, the whole liberation struggle, because South Africa, we've got apartheid is demolished. You know, Zimbabwe had its independence. Namibia has its independence. There's no more liberation struggle. We're now in charge. So even in terms of the people, the ordinary people who know that that's just a fallacy, but we go along with the lie. So every year we celebrate independence, you know, and I think to myself, this is a waste of money. What are we celebrating if we're so independent? Why is it African migrants are literally killing themselves, crossing the Sahara to cross the to come into Europe, to go to America? Why? Yeah, whereas I think in the 80s, a lot of us who were dispossessed, largely through Rasta, largely through black consciousness and being inspired by the Black Power movement, we were looking to Africa. We were looking to the Caribbean, we were excited about the opportunities that we now felt we had to kind of, you know, set

2:25:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
in place a new reality and what has happened is that, after so many years of independence, what we've seen is an intensification of the stratification in our societies and the gap between the haves and the have nots. It's fine if you're an elite it's fine if you're part of the political class and the elite class and the academic class and the business class, and you can afford to fly around the world and send your children to universities in Canada and North America and Britain and whatever. But what about the ordinary people? And the ordinary ones? A lot of them are the ones that we see coming here, and these are the ones who, a lot of the time, are very alienated from politics, party politics in their country, because it's messy. It's it's, you know, there's corruption, it can be dangerous. You know, you can lose your life. There's a lot at stake. And so people become very alienated, and then it becomes, you know, what, the law of the market, survival of the fittest. If I can get out and do something and send some money back home to help my little family, then I will do that. Yeah? Because if I sit down and listen to the wait for these politicians, all I'm seeing is, as some you know countries, they talk about chopping, all I'm seeing is people taking for themselves. So that's what I would say. And even in a lot of the Pan African groups that I have been part of, or I haven't been part of, too many Pan African groups, to be quite honest, but I've worked with many, what I've seen is that, especially as a section of us, who I say, the more African than the Africans, right? These, these are the ones that where the Africa, you know, have changed their name a lot of the time. Do the ceremonies,

2:27:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
the naming ceremonies, do pour libation at events, African Liberation Day, Kwanzaa, dress up in the African garms and and, you know, we try and have like an African culture away as much as you can have it outside of your homeland. But very few of these people actually engage with too many continental Africans. That's what I've observed. And when I say engage, I mean we're not organizing together in our structures, you know, like in your organization, whatever your leadership structure is, you got, like parity after 50% African from the continent or whatever. In PARCOE, in fact, it is African continental dominant, rather than diaspora dominant. And I believe that's made a huge difference, because I've learned a lot about African continental realities from Africans who are largely here because they've had to flee persecution back home, because they were championing issues like reparations. They were championing that the resources should go to the poorest and not just stay in the pockets of a few, and so they were persecuted in countries like Ghana and Nigeria and other places, and they have given me a window into our different experiences of enslavement and colonization. The other thing that I think, is that there is this false narrative that chattel slavery was something that just happened to us in the diaspora. So when people think about reparations, they start with slavery, right? And because slavery is seen as a diaspora experience, not an African continental experience, but who were we? Who were the people that were enslaved? Were they not continental Africans? So because of that, conceptually,

2:29:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
it's a lot of the movements that are there and that are championing this cause around reparations, they tend to be diaspora groups, and they tend to be groups whose focus is more on chattel slavery and what that has meant for us than direct colonization, which a lot of the Africans, perhaps, who they may encounter, might have more experience of because they've lived in, you know, Neo-colonial countries, Neo-colonial regimes. And for them, the enemy is not necessarily the white power structure, right, which is what we would see here. It's like I was at a debate yesterday on reparations, and there was a sister from the continent, and one of the things she said is that I'm afraid that by being here too long in England, I'm going to forget who I am as an African, because I feel that in Britain I'm forced to now be a part of a group like the black group, whereas in Africa I'm a human being. I can embrace a foreigner. I can embrace whoever culturally, these are my values, but in Britain, because of the stratification, I have to be down with, like the race struggle and this difference between us. But I fear that in doing that, that is going to make me like my oppressor, and therefore I will lose some of the essence of what I understand it means to be African and human. And that was an interesting conversation, because that's the point for a lot of people who've come from Africa, they are whoever they're fighting is often somebody who looks like us, they're not seeing the white hand of it, or European hand of imperialism, still

2:31:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
necessarily, because it's not necessarily that person who they have that close connection with. You know, they're not living necessarily in the same areas where the white people are, so they can be insulated to a degree, and in many respects, they maybe even be the people who they're working for and who feel, well, this is who is giving me a job. So it's very complex, but there are

some issues amongst us. There's also part of the legacy of internalized Afro phobia. You know, a lot of us have been taught and because we don't see a fighting Africa, this is a big part of it. In the 80s, a black youth who might not have even known they were Africans saw African liberation. They saw African freedom fighters. They saw Africans determined to throw off the yoke of direct colonization. Now we don't see so much of that. We see a class of people who think they're free and have really just become free to be like Europeans and to drink their champagne and to party like they do and live the high life and live in the Uptown areas and shop like them and wear the weave and wear the expensive clothes from Paris. And you know, we've we've arrived. That's what a lot of us see, and that's not attractive, because those of us who've been immensed in that have been born around it. Have literally gone to school with these people. We've seen, we've seen that, you know, we've seen how vacuous this civilization is that literally is standing on a shoestring we've seen past the myth and the lies, and a lot of us

2:33:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
are not attracted to what we see a lot of modern day Africans being attracted to. We're trying to get back home, even culturally. You know, even if people are physically not wanting to repatriate or rematriate. They're they're wanting to learn their African history. They're wanting to take African names. For some it may be about having relationships with Africans from the continent and ensuring that you know whatever it may be. And we're dispossessed, and we see that a lot of those who have what we're trying to reclaim are thinking, what do I need to learn African history? You know, it's like, man, it's amazing. It's like this role reversal, and we're seeing people literally dying to come here, dying. A lot of us who are here, who may not even want to go back to Africa, or who don't know where to go back to because don't know where we belong. We don't know who we are. We kind of know that even though we're here, we're looking around. We look at our experience. We're looking at all the racism. We're looking at this that you know how difficult it is still, despite the few that break through and think you're giving up that for this, do you know what you're doing? So there's not as much. It's unfortunate because you see, even prior to the 80s, you had the Pan African movement, you had the anti colonial movement. So there was a lot of a lot of the, as I said, the Africans who we were meeting. These were the fire brands, the revolutionaries, the people who went on to kind of lead independent countries. They were bringing a whole different wealth of knowledge and experience to even teach those of us in the diaspora. So when we had our interactions together,

2:35:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
we could see commonalities with our struggles. Now that sense of a commonality is not so easy to find, because even though you will get particular things. So even around immigration, unless you're a Jamaican national, where you now need visa visas as well. But a lot of the immigration struggles that say are a big thing for Africans from the continent, for people who see themselves as British and have got kind of settled stay here, they don't really relate to that struggle because it's not theirs. So this is the other thing. Some of the struggles you know, are different. Maybe the one struggle that is also uniting us is that our children, equally, are getting involved in so called gang activity or street organizations, and are, you know, becoming victims of gun and life crime equally, children directly from the continent, and children who are African diaspora, children that you know, maybe that's the common struggle that we're losing our children. But

that sense of Pan African solidarity is not really there, and I fear, because of the way, even though many of those who are leading some of the Windrush campaigns, is quite unprecedented, because that whole campaign is really around the right to Britishness, yeah. And what we're seeing is a Caribbean exceptionalism that wasn't there in the 80s. In the 80s, we knew we were the term was Afro-Caribbean. People called themselves that. Now you'll hear people say, I'm Caribbean. What's that? I'm no longer African because the Africans are those people over there, and actually, Africa is just a basket case, and we're not really seeing Africans stand up,

2:37:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
and the few leaders that we do see stand up, they kill them off, or they demonize them, like Mugabe, right? So we're not going to identify with that. So, yeah, it's a challenge and it's a problem, and it's something that I'm very conscious of. It's something that I do positive action around. Most of the people I relate to are Africans from the continent, and it makes a huge difference. And I believe that's a big part of why Paco, even though there are other reparations groups who will not want to give us our due and our credit. But I think PARCOE, even though we're small, we have been, we have made, been very influential in shaping the discourse and the movement, building strategies around reparations, and I believe part of that has been because of our truly Pan African ethos and the involvement of Africans from the continent. So we have a whole perspective, because left to a lot of us in the diaspora. We don't really understand Africa, because when we go to Africa, we're literally going, even though we're going on a pilgrimage to return home. We're kind of like tourists. We're not staying in the areas where the poor people live and we can afford us and we can we go and visit the dungeons and, you know, do all that cultural tourism stuff, but we're going back because we're we're still in love with the dream about being home, but we're not necessarily connecting with the struggles of the people on the ground when we go, and many who have repatriated, they've taken a degree of economic wealth that they've built up here, and they can afford to build a nice home and have a relatively good life.

2:39:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
But that's not necessarily the life of the ordinary African, and they're not necessarily living in the same area amongst the poorest of the poor. So even these things create animosities and tensions, because some of those back home look at some of us, and they think, look at you. You know you're coming here, and you're not relating to us, and you don't understand our struggle, and we're so you know, you don't realize what you're giving up, and we don't have what you have. And there's just a lot of misunderstanding, and there are not enough spaces that bring us together where we can share what our different journeys have been. You know, where we can share what our different journeys have been,

2:39:48 - Marci (Interviewer)
Right. So the last question is, do you have any advice for the youth.

Esther (Interviewee)
Oh, my God, I asked that question in my one

Yeah, first thing, be humble. You know, a lot of young people can have this tendency to think that they know it all. And I'm speaking as a former young person, because when you get that passion in you, and you get that excitement in you, and you've got this righteous sense of rebelliousness in you, you know, you can be a bit what's the word, like a born again Christian? You know, you can be zealous, you know. So I think be hum, be humble, learn humility. And if you don't learn it, it's going to be forced on you anyway, right? So humility is important, because as much as you've got new ways and you've got your passion and you've got something to add, there's a lot that you need to learn from those who've gone before, yeah,

2:41:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
and so I would say, take the time to speak to not only the elders, because when we think about the elders, we think about people who are senior citizens, right? But speak to people who have been, who've gone before you, they could be 10 years older than you. Learn about what has been done about the issue you care about, and see yourself as building on it and adding to it. Yeah, because even if you feel that things were not done properly, or look you look, even though you did all this, you've lost it all now, and you lost it because you didn't know business sense, and you hear all these things, whatever you may think, there's still a lot of learning and lessons that we can take from those who have gone before us, I would say to younger people, whatever you do, whatever your passion is, think about the collective, not just you, yourself and you okay, the way how society is structured now. It's all predicated, really, on individual advancement and success and progress, and actually the most evolutionary thing that you can do is return to community. So try and put your skills, your servants, your service, your talents, in service of, really, our people's movement, our people struggle. And for me, that movement of movements is the reparations movement. Because whichever way you see reparations, whatever your thing is, you will find a home in the reparations movement. If there's no place, you create your own place. Don't wait for nobody to invite you in. You, you, you relate to this movement in the way that you best know how, but you

2:43:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
can only do that if you're in touch with previous generations. Reparations is not a 21st century movement. Reparations is an intergenerational struggle, because it began with our ancestors, and in order to ensure that I do justice to them, I have to know them. I have to know what they were fighting for, and then I have to also be part of projecting into the future as to who we want to be. So looking back, but also looking forward is important. So think about not just you and yourself and your individual family. Think about the legacy that you want to leave and start building and working on that legacy from now. Yeah, to younger people, I would say, think about your community. Think about the building blocks of community, which are family, which are relationships, however you define a relationship, however you define family, whatever it is, these are the building blocks of society, and we cannot have progress and have a strong community if we don't have the strong building blocks of society, so bonding and building and forming solidarity with other people like you and other young people and other people is is, is part of of what you also have to create for yourselves, you have to make new memories for those that are to come. And you have to see yourselves as the custodians of a rich past, of a proud people

with a strong heritage, not a down people, not people, not us. Our history didn't start with slavery. So that's why it's important for you to even look at when we're talking about decolonize,

2:45:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
which a lot of young people talk about now. We do look at decolonize from what to what. Yeah, what was there before? So what is was there before that we can reclaim some things we need to just leave in the past, but some things are good, like our great civilizations and all the things that we commemorate when we commemorate our history and some of our great heroes and sheroes, some things are good and some things are things that we will want to take into our future. So those are some of the things I would say to young people. I would say, live in your power. Recognize the power of who you are, and don't be intimidated by anyone, including elders, you know, because I can remember being a young activist and how I know I was treated, and it was kind of like, who are you? You've just come we've been doing this walking liberation road 20, 30, years. Who are you? You're a nobody. I know what that felt like, and I know how intimidating that can be. But you know, when you are born to do something great, you have to just kind of hold, you know, walk in that greatness and not be afraid, and not fit, not, not kind of Cal, you know, bow down or, or kind of limit your potential on the basis of other people's fear. So I would say to young people, protect yourself. I would say, think about whatever it is that you're building, you're trying to build. You aspire to build your legacy to be. Think about how do you secure that? How do you protect that? How do you preserve that? How do you ensure that your legacy continues?

2:47:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
And think about what it is that you are creating and what it is that you are your legacy will be and how it is you want to be remembered. But I think it's important for young people to think futuristically, but also in terms of not just who we are now, but who do we see ourselves being. And I would say to young people, make connections with people, real people, not just the social media, which you're great at, all the gadgets and stuff, but make connections with people, go out into nature, rediscover what it is the ancients knew, what your ancestors knew and what made them so powerful that we are now even still reading about them and calling their names. So those are some of the things I would say, some of the advice that I would give to young people, I would say it's important to have mentors look to people older than you, who've got more experience than you, who've got more knowledge than you, who can teach you a thing or two about what you need to know, learn from them, share with them, build from what they've built, converse with them. I also think it's important for young people to get into oral history and to recognize that one day, they will be the libraries that will house the memories and the stories of many of those that have gone before I and the reason why I'm saying that is because, as an activist, I've met many fantastic people who've got some wonderful life stories and some quite colorful histories, and a lot of those people have now gone into the realm of the ancestors, and I wish that with some of them, like with Dorothy, I wish I was able to interview her,

2:49:00 - Esther (Interviewee)
you know. And once they're gone, they're gone. So value and appreciate the people who are around you, because when they're gone, they're gone. But if you can, you know, find ways to

connect with some of the elders and start with people in your family. Start with your parents, your uncles, your aunts, you know, your grandparents. That's where you start. Make sure that you carry something from the past with you into the future, that's what I would say,

2:49:39 - Marci (Interviewer)
Great. Well, unless you have any final comments?

Esther (Interviewee)
Well not really. I think I've said a lot, haven't I?

2:49:52 - Marci (Interviewer)
Well, I would like to thank you very much for this very interesting conversations. I usually like to summarize a bit what we've gone through, but there is a lot so thank you very much for really giving a lot of depth into what reparations means, all the different levels that are involved, and not just money compensation. Thank you as well for mentioning the Abuja conference and how it was a pivotal event in terms of reparations, not only for the diaspora, but also for Africans on the continent. Thank you as well for mentioning how Bernie himself was very key to this movement by setting up the African reparations movement. And thank you as well for building the links between his works, his work, and all the people from his generation and your work and the people from your generation.

2:51:00 - Marci (Interviewer)
Thank you as well for talking about culture as well and how culture is fundamental to repairing ourselves. Thank you as well for giving the conceptual framework of Chinwezu, as well as the UN definitions of reparations. Thank you as well for touching on South Africa and how South Africa, South Africa, at the time, was a key, a key issue and a key struggle for anyone in the community. And thank you as well for mentioning the 2001 Racism conference and how that actually that is actually the time point at which slavery is officially recognized as a crime against humanity. Thank you as well for covering, obviously a little bit press at the time and how, especially on the reparations issue, some people, even though, speaking from the community, can have a very controversial point of view on some aspects of it, including repatriation. Thank you as well for highlighting the tensions as well as what has brought people together in in fighting for for this very important issue. Thank you as well for for talking about intergenerationality and the issues around that and how we have to work to keep the links from one generation to the next, and especially on reparations, so that we don't think no one has done anything before us. Thank you as well for talking about the tensions as well with Africans from wherever they are on the continent and also on the in the world, so from the continent and the diaspora and as well, reflecting on our relationships

2:53:00 - Marci (Interviewer)
now versus our relationships back then. And thank you as well for articulating very well how the struggle is kind of changing as well with the tools that we have now, and that is not just legal and going through age jurisdiction said, but how we can bring everyone together to also get involved and think that their input is valuable in the struggle. So yeah. And finally, thank you as

well for giving advice to the youth, which is my favorite question, usually in the interview. And obviously, and obviously, the main one is really your personal trajectory, and and taking the time to explain that it didn't start at one particular day, that it was a build up from a very early age to coming to today and that and that it's key to tell those stories. So yeah, for all of these contributions, thank you very much.

2:54:05 - Esther (Interviewee)
And you know, I only touched on reparations. I only touched on it, my God.

Marci (Interviewer)
So thank you very much for this very, very interesting conversation. We appreciate that you took the time to share your experience and knowledge with us so generously. Thank you for taking part in this project.

Esther (Interviewee)
Thank you for the opportunity and for your patience and for waiting for me to turn up to pick you up.

Marci (Interviewer)
Thank you very much. I think this is the end of the interview. All right, great. Bye.