“Ten Point Program
For Reparations for African Americans in the United States”

TBS/The Black Scholar is joining with the Journal of African American History (JAAH), The Journal of Black Psychology, Souls: A Critical Review of Black Politics and Culture, The Journal of Pan-African Studies, African American Learners, The Review of Black Political Economy and other African American scholarly publications in issuing a “Call for Papers” for an upcoming Special Issue and a Forum over several issues on reparations, specifically exploring potential items to be included in a “Ten Point Program” for reparations payments to African Americans in the United States. The Black Scholar, JAAH and other black-oriented scholarly journals are soliciting manuscripts that provide a rationale for reparations and specify how reparations payments could be used to reconstruct African American civil society so as to strengthen and democratize African American social institutions and improve the quality of life of African Americans in the United States, especially the economic and educational conditions for children and youth. A Ten Point Program for U. S. Blacks mirrors and unites with the “CARICOM Ten Point Program” issued by the Caribbean nations in March 2014 (http://ibw21.org/commentary/caricom-reparations-ten-point-plan/).

The CARICOM Ten Point Program proposes to use “reparations as a development strategy.” The goal of the Caribbean nations is to use reparations payments to collectively alleviate the pressing psychological, social, economic and educational problems resulting from the crimes against humanity perpetuated by European nations’ slave trading, enslavement, genocide of the indigenous people, and colonialism that produced contemporary underdevelopment. The 14 CARICOM nations voted unanimously to seek reparations and demand: 1) an official apology from slaving and colonial nations; 2) support repatriation for those desiring resettlement in Africa; 3) the creation of an indigenous peoples development program; 4) support for cultural institutions such as museums and research centers that expose the colonialists’ crime against humanity and affirm Caribbean people’s humanity; 5) the launching of public health programs to address the chronic diseases afflicting Caribbean people; 6) support for illiteracy elimination programs; 7) the building of “bridges of belonging” to reconnect black Caribbeans to their African heritage through school and cultural exchange programs; 8) the development of reparatory programs to overcome the psychological trauma produced by enslavement and underdevelopment; 9) the transfer of knowledge of the latest technology and science into the training of Caribbean youth; 10) the reduction of domestic debt and cancellation of international debt.

TBS/The Black Scholar is seeking manuscripts that also use reparations as a strategy for development, as a mechanism for self-determination. We want manuscripts that provide a scholarly analysis of any issue or problem whose legacy can be traced to enslavement or racial oppression since slavery and how reparations payments could be used to improve the quality of life for contemporary U.S. Blacks. Using the CARICOM Ten Point Program as the model, what specific issues and problems should be included in reparations demands for people of African descent in the United States? For example, African Americans do not have to seek a “full apology” for slavery and slave trading
since one has already been issued by the U. S. Congress. However, like people in the Caribbean, African Americans face a severe health crisis and could use reparations funds to obtain increased access to medical services to combat childhood obesity, type II diabetes, HIV infections, breast cancer, and high infant mortality rates. We invite health professionals to submit proposals for the use of reparations payments for much needed medical programs aimed at African American neighborhoods and communities.

Many urban African American communities are food deserts; African Americans face not just the lack of access to affordable healthy food in their neighborhoods, but are also victimized by convenience stores and fast food restaurants that target Black communities as dumping grounds for over priced and/or poor quality food. How could reparation payments be used to address the questions of food insecurity and the lack of quality nutritious food? We invite scholars in a variety of fields, but especially those studying agriculture, urban farming, and nutrition to theorize on how reparations payments could be used to eliminate food deserts and make nutritious food available in urban Black communities.

Recently, there has been a significant decline in the enrollments at many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Should the Ten Point Program call for reparations to be used to increase the endowments and scholarship funds available at HBCUs? What would be the plan for disseminating funds to the HBCUs? Should a “Reparations Superfund” be created to provide successful educational alternatives to “test preparation” in public elementary and secondary schools, and to relieve the financial debt of college students and graduates who agree to work in social welfare and other programs created using reparations funds? How can reparations funds be used to support neighborhood redevelopment programs aimed at unemployed or formerly incarcerated black youth? These are just some of the possible objectives as we deliberate over what should be included in the Ten Point Program.

Frederick Douglass declared, “Power concedes nothing without a demand; it never has and never will.” But he also pointed out, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The purpose of this “Call for Papers” is to promote a dialogue among groups and individuals interested in pursuing reparatory justice in the 21st century by proposing what should be included in the African American Ten Point Program thereby to stimulate a revival of the reparations movement.

The focus on reparations is not new to journals united in this endeavor. Reparations have been an ongoing focus of Black/Africana Studies journals for several decades. In 1998, TBS senior editor Robert L. Allen published “Past Due: The African American Quest for Reparations” (The Black Scholar Vol. 28, No. 2, BLACK SOCIAL ISSUES (SUMMER 1998), 2-17). TBS founding editor and Ernest Allen demolished David Horowitz’s fraudulent anti-reparations arguments in “Ten Reasons: A Response to David Horowitz,” The Black Scholar Vol. 31, No. 2, (June 2001), 49-55. “The Case for Reparations” for African Americans in the United States was also made in The Journal of Pan-African Studies (August 2007); the JAAH (Winter-Spring 2012), in numerous books, articles, and most recently by Ta-Nehisi Coates in the Atlantic Monthly (June 2014). The next step is
to begin to express our vision for an improved future for our children and grandchildren through the expenditure of reparations funds. What should be the collective vision for African Americans in the 21st century? African Americans should follow the lead of their sisters and brothers in the Caribbean and begin the serious dialogue to formulate our “Ten Point Program.” A. Phillip Randolph argued, “You can do nothing without organization.” How should we organize and structure a mass democratic vehicle to pursue reparations in our lifetime?

TBS would like to begin with the Winter 2015 issue publishing forums on proposals for actions to be included in the Ten Point Program.