



La Voz de Esperanza

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements

* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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Je Suis Charlie! is the slogan that spurred two million people, including more than 40 world leaders, out to protest the January 7th killings in Paris. The terroristic act targeting *Charlie Hebdo* left twelve dead including ten journalists of the satirical magazine. Little mention is made of the Muslim policeman, Ahmed Merabet, among the dead. Little mention is made that prominent Muslim leaders condemned the killings immediately. Little mention is made of the four Jewish victims killed in a related attack on the same day.

Instead, the latest publication of *Charlie Hebdo*, the survivors' issue, has resulted in a wild buying spree with more than 3 million copies **sold out** with the expectation that no less than 7 million copies will be printed — far beyond the 60,000 copies normally put out. The front page features a cartoon of the prophet Muhammed tearfully holding up a "Je Suis Charlie" sign under the words, "All is forgiven." The interpretation is left open.

The Charlie Hebdo massacre was immedi-

ately interpreted as an assault on free speech and on the values held dear by French and Western society. The massive protest underscored this with a call for a *show of national unity*. Since then, tensions have increased everywhere. The religion and culture of Islam is being demonized and threats to Muslims have increased. Protests and violence against the French and Charlie Hebdo have also been ignited.

Why the fascination with violence? Why must we demonize "otherness" convinced that only *our* culture, *our* religion, *our* way of life is valid? What is the basic nature of humanness that compels us to look to violence as an answer for everything? We need to investigate the roots of violence and figure out our role in it — in a global community that exists beyond nation-states.

— G. Ramírez, editor



Letters to the Editor:

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There is much amiss in the letter, *Violence—It's In Our Genes* by Bill Stitchnot (*La Voz*, Dec 14/Jan 15). To start with, violence is a social construction not a scientific term carrying genetic predisposition. Often, the term has been used in conjunction with genetics in pseudo science in ways that increase racism and other bigotries. Furthermore, suggesting that something like "violence" can be explained away by genetic inheritance erases the societal conditions that build violence—in other words, it effaces the very point of Tarciso Beal's article, *Violence, the Goddess of America*, (*La Voz*, Nov 2014)—as I read it—that as a country we must repent our society-endorsed gun violence.

Rather than going into detail about the dangerous misconceptions behind the claim that violence is in our genes, though, I'd like to offer just one observation: the letter's author claims that over time, "the weaker, including the pacifists' genes were lost" and he repeatedly suggests that nonviolence is somehow the path of the "weaker" person. As someone whose family legacy (though I'd not suggest a genetic lineage) lies in passive resistance and peace activism, I'm familiar with many narratives of nonviolence; they suggest that most of the time, nonviolence and pacifism are the terrain of strength, not weakness. In times when people are speaking out against sanctioned violence in the streets: "Black Lives --indeed All Lives-- Matter" we'd do well to consider how we might be examples of peace, not false victims of fate/genetics. The lives of buena gente, such as Nick and Justis whose lives were commemorated in the same *Voz* issue give us exquisite examples of the strength of lives lived *por la paz*... *La Paz es Presente!* —Kamala Platt

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VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.