

Diane Lazar
Photo Journal
February 5, 2007
Sociology 214



The statue on the right is placed in between the mayors' municipalities in the center of Caracas. We had seen this statue after visiting the house of Simón Bolívar. It almost identically resembles the statue of Napoléon I. Both Bolívar and Napoléon have the same position: the horse's legs and the soldier's right hand are up in the air. They are both in a position of a riding soldier. They give off an image strong leaders. I found it ironic that both France and Venezuela have statues of their leaders in the same position even though, the goals of Bolívar and Napoléon were opposites. They both lived during the same time period (Napoléon 1769-1821, Bolívar 1783-1830). Napoléon in France was famous for being a great emperor occupying France, parts of Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The painting on the right, illustrates how Napoléon expresses his power by imitating Alexander the Great. Bolívar on the other hand, is a hero for liberating Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama from Spain. In Venezuela, Bolívar embodies the ideals of civil, human liberties, and the independence of Latin America from any foreign force.



This is the same picture as the one above, however it reveals the plaza as a whole. Viewing the plaza is important because we were told that during the coup against Chavez in 1998 there were shots from the various mayors' municipalities. It was a battle for power between the mayors in favor of Chávez and those against. In other words, there was a battle within the plaza with Bolívar in the middle. It is ironic to picture gun shots in the plaza with Bolívar's statue because to Venezuelans and to the rest of Latin America, he symbolizes peace, human and civil rights for all.



This picture shows the controversial place where Chávez marchers were accused of shooting at anti-Chávez supporters during the coup in 1998. This event was captured by the documentary; *the revolution will not be televised*. The statue commemorates the lives of the innocent civilians who died. This area is still hallowed by its past conflict evident through the police's presence as they took careful watch over the group's journey from Simón Bolívar's house to the Miraflores palace. Though residents walked by the monument and there was a constant flow of traffic however there were remnants of Venezuelan history because even today there are still guards taking control.



This picture illustrates the church in Barlovento. Judith Lopez and I had the chance to go to the religious celebration of the three kings before we saw the people dancing on the streets. What I noticed at the church service was that most people were waiting for the end of the service outside the church rather than praying inside. At the end of the service, people dressed as the three kings, went outside the church and commemorated the celebration by playing the drum. I found the celebration beautiful because I never experienced the event of an entire town dancing together as part of a religious celebration.

The next morning, I went to the church service. My non-proficient Spanish made it difficult for me to understand the service. However, I noticed that the majority of the people who attended the service were Afro-Venezuelan and the priest was White. I found it interesting that in Barlovento, a predominantly Afro-Venezuelan citizens, the church authority was white. My assumptions might be wrong that I only went to two church services in Barlovento. However, when we were in Venezuela, Julia, one of the leaders of the nuestro barrio clinic in Caracas told us that there was a split in the Catholic Church. She referred to it “as the church for the rich and for the poor”. By attending the service, I had a small taste of the church’s hierarchy.



During my stay in Barquisimeto, I had the privilege to learn about the different Afro-Venezuelan percussion instruments. Each region had its own type beats and traditional songs. I was impressed with the immense diversity of drums and beats. When I

learned how to play a certain beat, I realized how complex drumming is. The commitment Alvaro and Ledys have to the community center of San Juan is inspiring. Alvaro everyday goes to the community center to teach children how to play drums and with the rest of his free time, he volunteers at the radio station. Ledys also taught drums every day at the community center of San Juan. Ledys's full devotion to the area was made clear while disclosing his story about getting electrically shocked as a sign of his commitment to the center. After my stay in Barlovento, I realized that the Bolivarian revolution was created by the people, not so much by the government. In fact, the center was created in the early 90's before Chávez was in power and today the community center does not receive any aid from the government. Without people like Alvaro and Ledys, community center would not have been installed. The cooperation of the community built the center. The kids who participated in the center range from five to their 20s, and are vital to the continuity of this wonderful project.



This picture captures me falling in the coffee beans plantation. Before I even try to pick up the beans, I first slipped and proceeded to fall. This experience made me realize how hard of a task picking coffee beans actually is. It is intense labor with little pay. After everyone collectively in the group picked coffee beans, the total of the earning resulted to a little over a dollar. When coffee was first cultivated and sold in the 18th and 19th century, slaves lived off their coffee picking. In many parts of the world coffee picking is a form of cheap labor. This activity was a fun, interactive opportunity which helped me understand the intensity of labor.