

Venezuela Blog

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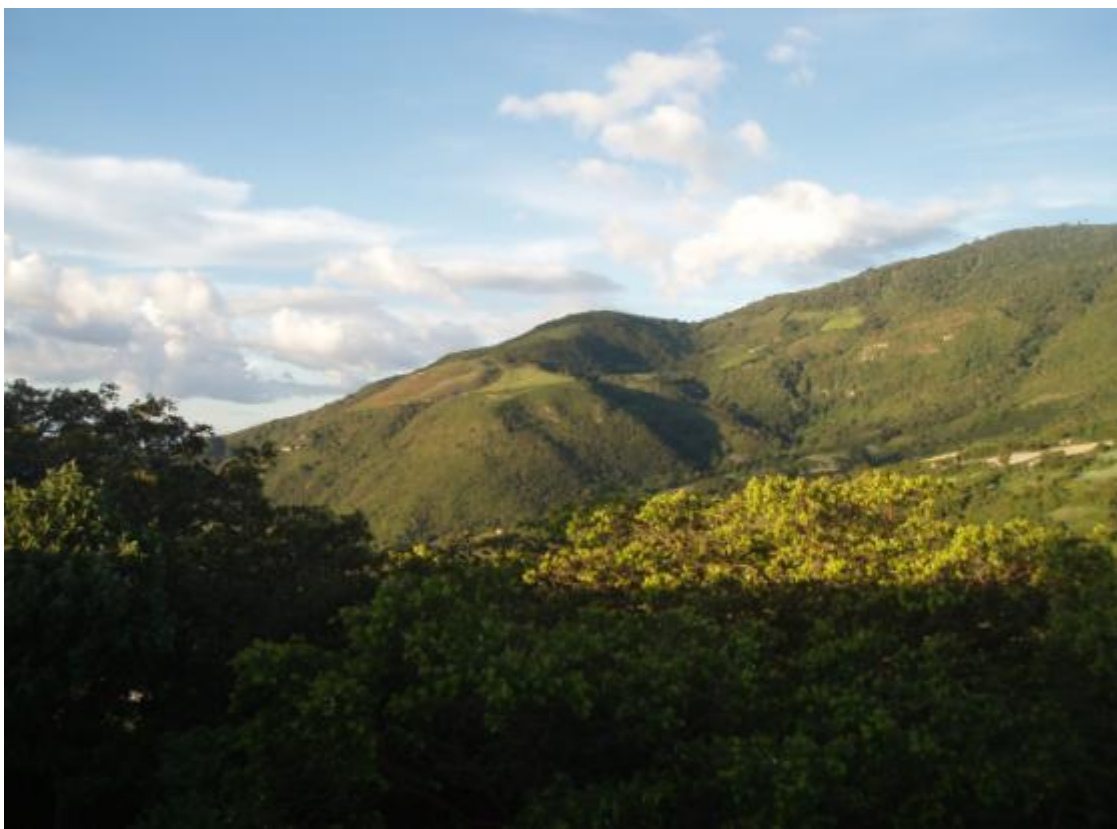
16 January 2009

Today, we flew home. We got up at 4:30AM, waved *adios* to Plaza Bolivar in Caracas, and headed down to the airport, still struck by the beauty of the little blue lights of the barrios strung along the mountainside. It's ironic that perhaps the least aesthetically appealing part of Caracas during the daytime becomes something so beautifully surreal at night.

Once in the airport and through our first gauntlet of customs questions, we set about spending the last of our bolivars. At this point, we had already lost several members of our group; Jenn and Matt to continue their own sustainable agriculture explorations in Ecuador and some others on different flights. It was about this time that it began to sink in that our trip was over, and many of us spent the various stages of the trip home digesting what we had been doing for the past fifteen days.

We did not have problems with delayed flights this time, or with customs. Most of us were either ready to go home to see parents and friends in the seemingly mere hours before classes start; others were hatching a plan to escape and stay in Venezuela soaking up the sun and putting off going back to class so soon.

The return to DC was a bit of a shock. After warm days at the beach, we suddenly found ourselves in single digit temperatures! It was also a shock to be back in the U.S., a place where talking about Revolution is usually frowned upon or pushed back to the 1960's, after we had spent so much time talking to farmers at *Las Lajitas* whose every word and action seemed devoted to progressing the Bolivarian Revolution, and revolution to liberate the people from oppression, particularly economic oppression. In the U.S., talking about economic liberation is



generally framed as anti-American. However, we are also living in times of political change with the advent of the inauguration of Barack Obama on January 20, a change that sure seems revolutionary after 8 years of war, eroding civil rights, and a failing economic system. As a class, our time in Venezuela studying sustainable agriculture and subsequently the political economy has certainly bolstered spirits about how much a country and government can change.