

WHAT SHALL I WRITE ABOUT?

I traveled thousands of miles to visit Colombia.

What shall I write about?

Shall I write about the warmth and beauty of the Colombia and its people and how I enjoyed hanging around *Plaza de Bolivar* and breathing the air of revolution and resistance?

Shall I write about how we went up the *Montserrat* and pleaded for peace and prosperity to our different gods at the shrine devoted to the Fallen Lord (El Señor Caído)?

Shall I write about how Colombia is so rich yet so poor? How its resources are its curse?

Shall I write about how Colombia is racked not just by one but many insurgencies and how these conflicts seem intractable and unsolvable?

Shall I write about how disconnected the government is from the people and how the decision makers in central Bogota fail to see how their "corporatist" and "technocratic" approaches to ending the conflicts fail to work in the peripheral swamps of the majestic *Rio Magdalena*?

Shall I write about the growing frustration and resignation of the poor and the dispossessed that find it increasing difficult to understand how a war supposedly being fought in their name has brought them more harm than good?

Shall I write about how drugs and foreign interests – their plans, their guns and their bombs - are making the situation more violent?

Shall I write about how the Government created more problems for themselves when the paramilitary forces they created and used against the “rebels” become “rebels” themselves?

Shall I write about how the frame "if you are not with us, you are against us" is constricting the room for maneuver for peace advocates and civil society organizations to bring the parties to non-violent dialogue and collaboration?

Shall I write about how Government totally misses the point when they continue to pour millions of money, create efficient bureaucracies and hire top-notch managers to perfect their response to the deluge of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and neglect addressing the root causes of displacement?

Shall I write about the hopes and dreams of men and women like Mario or Tathiana who, despite odds, are working silently and diligently to prepare for the dawning of peace in Colombia?

What shall I write about?

For the longest time, I could not write these lines. I could not write them for to do so would have exposed the undeniable truth: I needed not fly thousands of miles to learn these things.

I could just have written about home.

Bong Montesa
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