

exploitation by outsiders was very strong. Equally strong was the idea that Costeños had the historical right to be the beneficiaries of the exploitation of the region's resources.

Similar views were held concerning the political arena. The idea of the right to local political control by historically marginalized Creoles was preeminent. There were strong feelings against clientelism in both the political and the professional realms, which favored Mestizos over Creoles in the local arena. In short, OPROCO championed the idea that politics and the economy should be under local control.

Donovan Brautigam Beer and Creole Culturism

In the OPROCO Creoles' public discourse, their tactical regionalist orientation and preoccupation with socioeconomic matters overshadowed questions of cultural and racial marginalization and exploitation. In the early 1970's, however, there were a few cryptic references in *La Información* to Creole racial identity and the existence of racism directed at them. All appear in the satirical "La esquina de Wing Sang" or "La esquina de Erasmo" columns signed with pseudonyms such as "the Detective" or "Sherlock Holmes."¹⁰ This was a case of the unspeakable being placed in the mouth of the nameless and farcical. These statements indicate that, although for tactical reasons OPROCO chose to ignore racial and cultural matters, these issues were of some significance for Creoles.

In 1970 the Detective lamented the reluctance of local authorities to appoint blacks (here synonymous with Creoles) as jury members. This snippet published on October 6, 1970, includes a racial epithet against Mestizos and is unprecedented in its Creole chauvinism: "only 15 *negritos* were involved, even though here they are the majority and the most suitable elements and of greater intelligence than many *pañas* [Spaniards], who hardly know how to scratch out their innocuous scribbings." The meaning of blackness in this jocular but biting discourse was equivocal, however. In an "Esquina de Erasmo" column (August 16, 1972, original emphasis), the racist attitude of the head of the Nicaraguan baseball federation, FENIBA, was decried by the Detective in the following terms: "[he] spewed denigrating phrases about our *negrito* players . . . ; these procedures and insults are what makes one feel *British*."

The idea of Creoles being simultaneously black racially and Anglo culturally and nationally was a recurrent, albeit veiled, theme in *La Información* during the early seventies. It would become an explicit element of cultural politics among some sectors of the community in the coming years.

From the discussion in chapter 5 we know that there was a simmering national dialogue concerning race, culture, national identity, and the place of Costeños in the nation throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Outside of Brautigam Beer's articles on history, however, Creoles had not publicly taken part in this discussion. In the mid-1970's Creole voices began to be heard on these issues, and three explicitly articulated Creole positions emerged: the culturalists, the black Sandinistas, and the antiracists. *La Información* provided the venue for some of the original Creole statements in this debate, but serious Creole-Mestizo interchange took off in the pages of *La Prensa*, reaching a crescendo in 1976.

Just why this debate came to a head in 1976 is unclear. These were volatile times in Nicaragua. There was growing opposition to the Somoza regime and increasingly radical discourse being bandied about in the Pacific by those associated both with UDEL and the FSLN. This was also a period of Mestizo rediscovery and fascination with the exotic Atlantic Coast and its cultures. Coast music and dance, especially the May Pole, became the rage in the Pacific. The Atlantic Coast became the destination of the adventurous for their Holy Week excursions.

In the northern portion of the Coast, the formation of ALPROMISU (Alianza para el Progreso de los Pueblos Miskitos y Sumos—Alliance for the Progress of the Miskitu and Sumu Peoples) in 1974 to promote the rights of the Coast's indigenous population and the economic development of their communities focused Mestizo attention on the region (see, e.g., *La Prensa* [Managua] [June 15, 1974]). The response to the news of ALPROMISU's formation was immediate and hysterical (*La Prensa* [June 9, 1974]):

THREAT OF MISKITU REBELLION

The Miskitu . . . of Puerto Cabezas are organizing a genuine rebellion against the Nicaraguan authorities . . . they organized a march that culminated with the raising on the Coast of an English flag and speeches threatening that, if there are no Miskitu mayors, they will rise up in protest and ask for help from foreign governments.

In the South the splintering of OPROCO facilitated the emergence of more radical dissident positions that included questions of race and culture. It is difficult to judge their numbers, but some key OPROCO members resented the close identification of the organization with the PLN and the occupation by Mestizos of key government positions at the behest of the party hierarchy. A few resigned from the organization over these issues. In some cases, these persons were prepared to disregard the taboo against public discussion of the sensitive issues of race and

culture; however, in general, during the late 1970's OPROCO remained extremely supportive of the Somoza regime and increasingly reluctant to level criticism at the regime's handling of Coast issues and reticent to join the emerging debate on race and class. This no doubt goes a long way in explaining OPROCO's waning influence on popular Creole politics from the mid-1970's onward, especially among the young.

The central Creole figure in the emerging national debate on race and culture was Donovan Brautigam Beer. Through the 1960's and the 1970's, he published a number of articles, mostly on Coast history, in *La Información*. Though he was not a member of OPROCO or of the PLN, he was of the same status and age group as the OPROCO members and had been educated in the same institutions. He was highly respected by them as *the* Coast historian and held political ideas that in general were very similar to theirs.

On January 31 and February 27, 1973, *La Información* published a number of articles by Brautigam Beer. In most respects, these represented a continuation of the impressive body of scholarly production that had made him, by the late 1960's, the outstanding national authority on Coast history and culture. In the articles, which were addressed to Costeños, he argued explicitly that their culture distinguished Atlantic Coast identity from that of Pacific Nicaraguans. He also strongly urged Costeños to take pride in their cultural traditions and to organize to preserve them: "We think that the time and the circumstances demonstrate the need to preserve, perpetuate, and disseminate what gives depth and form to the Coast . . . What has distinguished and will distinguish the Coast? Folkloric traditions" (Brautigam Beer 1973). In these articles Brautigam Beer also traced the folkloric aspects of Creole culture to European origins.¹¹ This, in part, was the basis for his assertion that the maintenance of these traditions would make Bluefields attractive to "cultured people" internationally.

Three years later, in a series of articles published in *La Prensa*, Brautigam Beer considerably elaborated these ideas into a coherent theory of Nicaraguan/Costeño racial/cultural relations. These articles were part of an unprecedented barrage of articles in *La Prensa* over the course of 1976, that expressed opinions about the Coast. Brautigam Beer himself, by far the most productive and knowledgeable contributor, wrote more than twenty. In this body of work he clearly outlined what I refer to as his "culturalist" perspective. In 1976 only a handful of Creoles were capable of laying out this perspective as extensively and skillfully as he was; however, my reading of the available Creole literature of the time and my experiences in the Creole community beginning five years later lead me to believe that many other Creoles, especially those who were older and relatively well educated, including

most of the members of OPROCO, shared Brautigam Beer's perspective. Therefore, this 1976 body of work merits close attention.

In contrast to most of the Creole intellectuals writing during the seventies, Brautigam Beer in this period was not centrally concerned with the economic and political exploitation of the Coast. When he directly addressed these issues, as he did in an article published toward the end of 1976, he coincided with most Creole intellectuals in recognizing the foreign and national sources of exploitation and with the more radical in naming these forms of exploitation as colonialism: "From English colonialism to today's internal colonialism, the attention conceded to the region has been determined by the political and economic interests of the metropole" (*La Información* [December 17, 1976]). He also connected these issues of political and economic power directly to struggles over racial/cultural identity and status, however. In the same article, Brautigam Beer states that the politico-economic underdevelopment of the Atlantic Coast had been maintained by an attitude "determined in part by the class system, in particular, the prejudices of the metropole." For him a "class system" was akin to what I would call "status": "an arrangement of internal and external relations, constituted by the concession of 'deference' to individuals, roles, and institutions and taking into account the place they occupy in the systems of power, property, occupation, etc." This key element, deference, for him was an act of respect or honor associated with the sentiment of equality or inferiority. Sentiments of disrespect, deprecation, subestimation, or superiority were also part of this concept. The political and economic subordination of the Coast by the foreigners and, more important for Brautigam Beer, Pacific Nicaraguans was a product of the deprecating attitudes that the latter held toward Costeños. A major thrust of his work was challenging these attitudes.

One of Brautigam Beer's most important priorities was to challenge what he believed to be the Nicaraguan Mestizos' erroneous assumption that Costeños were backward and uncivilized. "Was the Coast backward and living in darkness before 1894? Some believe so" (*La Prensa* [September 23, 1976]). As we shall see, Brautigam Beer insisted that Nicaraguans were not racist. Nevertheless, he was particularly concerned to counter Mestizo assertions that Costeños and especially Creoles were racially black and of African descent. For him, such a racial designation signaled uncivilized primitiveness and inferiority and had to be denied. His counterassertion was that racial admixture had eliminated the racial specificity of Costeños.

He railed against the irrationality of the "one-drop rule" as it operates in the constitution of U.S. racial identities: "This mental illness [racism] has penetrated as far as North American sociology . . . A blonde white

man with one drop of black blood for these sociologists belongs to the Negro race as if his blood had another color than red" (*La Prensa* [May 26, 1976]). He stated clearly in this article the idea that racial identity was socially constructed and implied that application of the one-drop rule in Nicaragua was equally ridiculous.

In "Errores sobre la Costa Atlántica" he points out what to him are the contradictions involved in the Mestizo racialization of Creoles as blacks (*La Prensa* [September 4, 1976]):

Let's bring together two identical specimens, one from the Pacific and the other from the Atlantic (the Costeño could be blond). The latter is accepted as a Spanish Mestizo, as is the first. But upon learning that he is from the Coast and that he speaks English, now he [the latter] is black. . . . the descendants of the surnames indicated [mostly German] . . . were considered to be of mixed European ancestry; on the other hand, the Creoles were those of Scottish ancestry and the blacks were blacks. However, around 1894, they [blacks] were denominated by Migration [the branch of the Nicaraguan state concerned with immigration status] to be black Jamaicans, and after 1910 they are now black Creoles, though in the Coast a differentiation has always been made.

Brautigam Beer believed that, although some of their ancestors were black, the Creoles were in fact a very racially mixed group as a result of the high level of miscegenation among Europeans, Amerindians, and Africans that had taken place over the course of Coast history (*La Prensa* [September 23, 1976]). To identify Costeños in general as belonging to one or another race would be incorrect. Though he did refer to some Coast groups as Indians, he never referred to Costeños as black. In general, identity as a "Costeño," the only word he consistently used to name the Coast population, was for him not racialized.¹² Lest Mestizos try to use the Costeños' multiracial ancestry as the basis for claims to racial superiority, Brautigam Beer pointed out that "Nicaraguan culture is not Hispanic, as you claim, but Indio-Afro-Hispana" (*La Información* [October 21, 1976]).

For Brautigam Beer, Costeños were not only racially but also culturally mixed and heterogeneous, a point he makes over and over again in his work. For example, in his study of the element of Creole culture best known to Mestizos, the May Pole dance and music, he stated (*La Información* [May 8, 1976]): "Costeño culture is totally heterogeneous and its May Pole is the result of the confluence of various cultures." Despite this hybridity, however, he emphasized in a number of articles

that Coast culture was preeminently European in origin: "Costeño culture, being hybrid, has influences that are now well known. In the first place, we have the English influence, next the North American, the Miskitu, the Spanish. The Costeño people themselves have also forged their own ideas" (*La Prensa* [April 20, 1976]), and more specifically in the case of Creoles, English (*La Prensa* [May 8, 1976]): "A critical revision of the oral and literary testimony . . . indicates that the May Pole of the extinct Mosquitia is a relic of universal culture, in general, of European culture and, in particular, that of Great Britain." He continues this theme in another article (*La Prensa* [August 4, 1976]): "The majority of the 'English' Costeños have some English blood. Their parents, who in many cases were English, transmitted to them English culture with some modifications determined by the time and the distance." Brautigam Beer's emphasis on the English roots of Costeño culture and the ethnographic descriptions of the culture he provides make it clear that, in general, when he wrote about Costeño culture, he was referring to that of the Creoles, not the indigenous population.

In some of his writings, Brautigam Beer admitted that many Creoles, though certainly not all, had some African ancestry. Consequently, to sustain his argument about the European character of Costeño culture, he had to explain away possible African contributions. This he was able to do, despite his scathing criticisms of U.S. sociologists, by using outdated, but still commonly accepted, U.S. sociological theory (e.g., Frazier [1939] 1951). In his article on the May Pole dance and music, Brautigam Beer argued convincingly that African culture had had no influence on Costeño culture (*La Prensa* [May 8, 1976], emphasis added):

Africans, once in the New World, separated from their brothers who spoke the same language and shared the same culture, were inevitably obligated to forget the major portion of their culture. In Jamaica and other regions, they produced a subculture that was, in part, an imitation of the culture of their masters . . . With the growth of the colored population, the subculture became the popular culture. The *natural* creativity, inventiveness, and musicality of this population created a new style for the May Pole celebration.

Brautigam Beer was prepared to accept that "Afro-Creole Jamaicans" had made a contribution to aspects of Creole culture that ranked second only to that of the British; however, he claimed that what they had contributed was corporeal, innate, stereotypically black, and only an amendment to what was fundamentally British.

Through this series of arguments, Brautigam Beer went about establishing the European pedigree of Coast culture with the aim of disproving Pacific Mestizo claims of its debased and primitive nature. Simultaneously, he developed a related set of arguments that challenged Mestizo national cultural chauvinism and specifically the idea that there should be one homogeneous Nicaraguan culture that was the basis for national unity and identity. For him this national cultural chauvinism was an equally important basis for the marginalization and exploitation of the Atlantic Coast by the Pacific.

In his argument for a culturally pluralistic Nicaraguan national identity, Brautigam Beer was careful to point out that, unlike the intractable problems being experienced by the United States, the problem in Nicaragua was one of ethnocentrism and not racism. In his principal article on the subject of racism, he constructs an exceptionalist argument by recounting how a North American resident in Nicaragua had gone back to the United States for a visit and was not allowed to get on a bus in the South "because it was for colored people. He had forgotten that he was not in Central America, where discrimination is immaterial" (*La Prensa* [May 26, 1976]). In explaining this difference he claimed that, "as there were few Spaniards who came to Latin America, and almost only them, there has been no noticeable discrimination."

According to Brautigam Beer the problem in Nicaragua, then, was not racism but the less-intractable ethnocentrism (*La Prensa* [July 7, 1976]): "an ex-schoolteacher was sent to Bluefields as commander [of the National Guard]. He was full of an ethnocentrism that still has not disappeared." His accusations of Mestizo ethnocentrism were based on the Mestizos' unwillingness to accept the civilized (i.e., European) status of Costeño culture. For him Mestizos were ethnocentric because, from their racialized view of Costeños, they mistakenly believed that Costeño culture was principally derived from its Amerindian and African cultural roots. His argument, however, was one of cultural relativism only in the sense that he thought that the Costeños' European heritage was at least the equal of the Mestizos'. He did not argue for the independent validity of the Costeños' non-European cultural background.

For Brautigam Beer, Mestizo ethnocentrism was also evident in their refusal to embrace Costeño culture as legitimately Nicaraguan. He argued strongly against the idea that there was only one Nicaraguan culture. He presented ethnographic data proving that Coast culture was worthy of recognition as a legitimate Nicaraguan culture and he championed the benefits of a multicultural nation: "Costeño culture is an agreeable variation in the multiform national culture" (*La Prensa* [June 29, 1976]):

The living poetry of this Coast, the May Pole, reestablished in its ideal form, will enrich the cultural wealth of the country, maintaining diversity in unity, inasmuch as variety is the fragrance of life, the immense poetry of God, the supreme art, and the supreme science. Those who argue for uniformity, for cultural homogeneity, contradict nature's testimony, the intrinsic being of humankind, and do not recognize the character and power of God. (*La Prensa* [May 8, 1976])

A geographic people that does not include all of its historical roots will perish for lack of vision. (*La Prensa* [July 29, 1976])

Brautigam Beer's pleas for national cultural pluralism called for an egalitarian relationship between the nation's cultures, and his writings clearly reflected his awareness of and selective utilization of the concept of cultural relativism.

His articles about the Atlantic Coast during the period in question contained yet another paradoxical theme. He never explicitly stated but nevertheless continually implied the idea that Costeño culture was actually more civilized than and therefore superior to Mestizo culture. This idea is presented in a number of forms. He maintained, for example, that Coast culture, because it was heterogeneous, from diverse origins, and in constant contact with foreign cultures, was more cosmopolitan than Mestizo culture (*La Prensa* [April 20, 1976]): "The man from the Coast is not as ethnocentric as those from other parts . . . He is cosmopolitan, considers himself a citizen of the world." He also claimed that Coast culture was very close to its European roots (*La Prensa* [June 29, 1976]): "A friend from Corn Island relates that arriving on the docks of London he could not understand what language was being spoken (it was Cockney), but when he entered the British Museum he felt right at home." There was an implication in his work that Coast culture was closer to English culture than Nicaraguan Mestizo culture was to that of Spain.

Finally, Brautigam Beer's insistence that Coast culture had its roots in English culture and not in African or Amerindian cultures established for it a higher rank in the international hierarchy of nations and cultures.

Brautigam Beer's writings distilled, refined, and simultaneously generated the dominant counterhegemonic Creole discourse on identity during this period. That discourse's constituting ideas were key elements of Creole political common sense. As elaborated into a philosophy by Brautigam Beer and other leading Creole intellectuals, it took from and skillfully utilized a number of influential international dis-

courses. These included its adroit manipulation of the dominant international notions of the hierarchy of nations and cultures, emerging Third World ideas of dependency and anticolonialism, as well as liberal democratic notions of cultural pluralism.

In essence this position maintained that the Coast was an exploited internal colony of the Pacific portion of Nicaragua. This historical relationship of Mestizo oppression was preserved in part because the people of the Pacific held a series of erroneous ideas about the Atlantic Coast. The most problematic were Mestizo notions that Costeños were backward, uncivilized, and non-Nicaraguan culturally because they were racially black and Indian. On the contrary, the central ideas of the "culturalist" position were that Costeños were indeed different, but that this difference was culturally and not racially constituted and that in the comparison of cultural differences, Costeños actually came out ahead. The "culturalist" view was that Costeños were Creoles who were urban, educated, and predominantly Anglo culturally. In other words, they practiced a culture derived from that of their British ancestors, which, if the Mestizos insisted, could be shown to be more civilized than their own.

According to the culturalists, Mestizo racialized (not racist) assumptions of Costeños' blackness were also mistaken. The idea was that Mestizos, while they had no history of racist practice of the sort found in the United States, mistakenly believed Costeños to be black—of African descent. The culturalists' counter position held that Creoles were not black but racially mixed (as were Nicaraguan Mestizos) and therefore racially neutral. The most positive formulation of this idea understood black/African culture to have been erased by slavery; therefore, Creole people were a cultural blank slate on which their English ancestors wrote. At its most negative, this formulation suggested the idea of black culture as primitive—nothing more than the instinctual and libidinal urges of black bodies leaving the way open for the Anglo portion of Creole heritage to fill that cultural void.

The culturalist position as argued by Brautigam Beer exposes a key element of Creole political common sense, that is, the idea of the Creoles' Anglo cultural identity, not black racial identity, as the standpoint from which to resist Mestizo oppression. Moreover, through Brautigam Beer's skillful rhetorical moves, he connected a series of commonsense Creole ideas in a unique way with powerful potential for the future of Creole politics. As we have seen, he argued that the political and economic subordination of the Atlantic Coast by Mestizo Nicaraguans—which Creoles in general believed was their lot—was the product of the Mestizos' deprecating opinion of Creole culture—which

Creoles in general believed the former held. This created a commonsense relationship between a set of ideas in which the lack of Mestizo appreciation of the Creoles' Anglo cultural heritage was understood to be the source of all forms of the group's marginality. The commonsense resolution of this problem, from the culturalist perspective, was the construction of a culturally plural Nicaraguan nation in which the Creoles and their Anglo culture would have equal standing with the Mestizos.

As might be expected, these Creole opinions printed in *La Prensa* over the course of a year of intense debate drew impassioned opposition from many Mestizo intellectuals. This served only to reinforce these crucial elements of Creole common sense. Some of the most impassioned rebuttal came from the intellectuals of Chontales, the Nicaraguan department that forms the interior frontier between the Pacific and Atlantic zones (Eli Tablada Solís, *La Prensa* [October 8, 1976]):

In my opinion, the ideas of Mr. Brautigam Beer should not be disseminated by *La Prensa*, which is a newspaper much read by Nicaraguans, inasmuch as such ideas are contrary to Nicaraguanness, which, as you well know, is based in our Hispanic roots. What unites the Nicaraguans is their Spanish culture and Catholic religion. . . . Mr. Brautigam Beer opposes the Hispanicization or the Nicaraguanness of our country, . . . [Spanish] must be spoken in the entire Nicaraguan territory because it is the language of our forbears who have conquered and colonized these lands, to pray to Jesus Christ and speak Spanish, as our great poet Sir Rubén Darío said.

The Black Sandinistas' Focus on Imperialism and Racism

Though the most prevalent and by far the most highly elaborated, the culturalist position was not the only Creole position on these issues. It was not even the most controversial. In December 1975 David McField, a nationally known Creole poet, was interviewed about the Atlantic Coast by Rosario Murrillo.¹³ McField had moved to Managua from Bluefields to attend university twenty years earlier and stayed on. He was by this time a member of Gradas, a group associated with the arts and closely aligned with the FSLN. He presented a perspective on Creole politics and identity later characteristic of a group I call the "black Sandinistas." These were Creoles, mostly young and male, affiliated with the Sandinistas. I have already referred to Enrique Campbell's article published in the June 29, 1972, issue of *La Información* after the

ENALUF demonstration as an initial statement of this group's evolving viewpoint. In 1972 Campbell's perspective blended Sandinista political discourse with an emphasis on the specific problems of the Coast:

Liberty is a right given by God to each man and therefore must be respected. Here they take freedom of speech from us; to speak in honor of the truth is a mortal sin. This community is a slave to fear and therefore does not have the right to act and express its ideas. A community is what its citizens make of it. As soon as we begin to open our eyes, the community will begin to develop.

We must start to open our eyes so that we can see more clearly: Puerto Cabezas, a town almost extinct for the lack of resources; the rich resources of the mines of Rosita and Bonanza have been exploited with no benefit remaining for the people; Bluefields is on the road to the extermination of its natural resources; the wood has already been finished; the bananas are already finished; the shrimp are about to be finished; the city has received no benefit because up until now we have been unable to protest with valor and virility and distancing ourselves for partisanship. WITH OUR SILENCE WE ARE DIGGING OUR OWN GRAVES. I think it is much better to struggle for our rights than to die of hunger because we are cowards. The earth is only a transitory stage, sooner or later we will have to leave it, but while we are here we have to live with dignity.

In 1972 a number of elements of Campbell's position represented a new radicalism in Coast politics clearly influenced by international national liberation movements and, closer to home, by the positions of the FSLN. He emphasized the role of youth in political struggle while criticizing the cowardly, compromised position of their elders. He denounced the Liberal and Conservative hold on Nicaraguan political processes. He indirectly condemned the authoritarianism of the Somoza regime. He emphatically pointed out the consequences of the exploitation of Atlantic Coast peoples and natural resources by international capitalists. He advocated a radical "patria libre o morir" (free homeland or die) sensibility. He also explicitly referenced, for the first time in *La Información*, the Theology of Liberation.¹⁴

In 1975, McField's article added racial politics as a key focus of this emerging discourse. In his interview McField referred to the Creoles as blacks (*negros*) and stated that they were descendants of Jamaicans and Caymanians. His major theme was that most of the negative circumstances of Coast blacks were the result of "the years of exploitation by

North American companies, . . . [and] the decisive influence of the English first through direct control and later through their Caribbean colonies" (Murrillo 1975:10, 24).

McField claimed that Costeños thought themselves superior culturally to the Mestizos of the Pacific and, unfortunately, lacked a Nicaraguan national identity. He also stated that, because of the "years and years of colonization and servitude," Coast blacks were submissive to their former English and American exploiters and had acculturated toward the Anglo cultural standards of their oppressors. For McField this process, positively valued in the culturalist paradigm, was clearly negative. He also asserted that Coast blacks had internalized the racist conceptions of them held by these foreign exploiters and "creat[ed] our own image in the form in which these people want to see us." He stated that only in recent years, with the appearance of black power, the Black Panthers, and Muhammad Ali, had these submissive attitudes begun to change. He declared that this series of problems could be remedied only by profound structural and economic change on the national level because, according to the model he derived from dependency theory, the Coast had all the problems of "the Latin American peasantry." He did not mention the possible role of Mestizo ethnocentrism or internal colonialism raised by the culturalists.

From the black Sandinista perspective as presented by McField, the problems of the Coast were seen as stemming from the economic exploitation of international capital supported by the U.S. and British states. Racism against Costeños was principally the legacy of the activities of racist imperialists on the Coast. In this set of ideas, there was a clear disjuncture between Costeños and the foreign exploiters who came to take advantage of the Coast's resources and the labor of Costeños and then left.

This is the only expression of the black Sandinista paradigm in *La Prensa* or *La Información* during this period. I consider it to be a successor to the Enrique Campbell article published three years earlier in *La Información*; however, there were differences in the two arguments, most notably the emphasis on race, culture, and racism and the absence of a criticism of Pacific Mestizos in McField's presentation. These differences had to do with the increasing impact of Sandinista anti-imperialism and the heightened level of national discourse about race and culture during this period.

My interactions with Creole Sandinistas five years later lead me to believe that the black Sandinista position, as exemplified by Enrique Campbell and especially David McField, was held by many young Creole university students during the late 1970's. They, like Campbell and

McField, had been radicalized by their experiences attending university in the Pacific and by 1976 were involved in political organizations aligned with the FSLN. Most, if they did not already belong, would become members of the party in the future. Members of the group would take control of Bluefields in the name of the FSLN in mid-1979, and many played a central role in Creole politics during the 1980's.

SICC and the Struggle against Internal Colonialism and Racism

The split in OPROCO opened space for the fifth Creole social movement. In early 1976 Roberto Hodgson, a former president of OPROCO who would soon resign from the organization, wrote a stinging editorial in *La Información*, now OPROCO's official organ, denouncing the Somoza government's key Coast development project—the intercoastal canal. He claimed that the development efforts of the state did not take into account the interests of Costeños but instead “only personal interests” (Hodgson 1976). This criticism was seconded two months later by Rollin B. Tobie F., a leading Creole member of OPROCO's Managua chapter. His editorial in *La Información* also represented an initial published statement of an emerging Creole paradigm that linked racism against the group with the internal colonialism suffered by the Coast at the hands of Mestizos from the Pacific. This perspective was so incendiary that the paper's OPROCO editorial board felt compelled to place a disclaimer at the foot of the column.

Tobie's editorial is noteworthy from a number of perspectives. First, he places the struggle of Costeños in international and African diasporic perspective by citing Kwame Nkrumah and the struggle for African independence and arguing that the Coast existed in a state of neocolonialism in relation to the Pacific portion of the country (1976b): “The dichotomous word ‘neocolonialism’ was coined by the deceased pan-African leader Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and its meaning in essence is applicable to our condition as postcolonials of the British.” This was an extremely radical statement because it not only characterized the relationship between the Coast and the rest of the Nicaraguan nation as one of purposeful exploitation by the latter rather than neglect, but also constructed the Coast as occupying a position similar to that of the previously colonized nations of Africa and the Caribbean.

Tobie goes beyond territory-based economic exploitation and raises the specter of ethnocentrism and racism (1976b): “the ridiculously low number of compatriots suffering under the egotistic illusion that they as individuals have progressed should think about the fact that not even one Creole element has been outstanding, neither in the political field nor in the social hierarchy nor in the economic world. The forces that

manipulate our destinies want only the illusion of progress, not the essence of our economic and political improvement.”

The response from less-radical members of OPROCO based in Bluefields, who now controlled *La Información*, was swift. In a front page editorial in the next edition, Hugo Sujo asserted that the canal project did indeed represent progress for the Coast, that “a strong and stable government like ours . . . cannot go around consulting the people of every region of the country each time that they plan a project,” and that, while there were problems concerning the exploitation of the Coast's resources, they were trying to solve them through the system. Sujo, adopting a position that was very different from that of OPROCO only a few years earlier, went on to write that Creoles were represented in positions of power in a manner commensurate with the size of their population. Accusing Tobie of overplaying Creole racial victimization, he added (1976, emphasis added): “in the system without discrimination in which we now live, to lament and to worry too much, opening past wounds that are now being healed, constitutes ethnic masochism.”

Tobie's article implying Mestizo racism, Sujo's response denying it, and Brautigam Beer's *La Prensa* article also dismissing the possibility of Mestizo racism were published within three weeks of each other in May and June of 1976. Undoubtedly influenced by the McField article published six months before, which opened up the national discussion of race, these Creole essayists were clearly in conversation. Sujo and Brautigam Beer staked out the reformist criticism of the Coast's relation to the nation while simultaneously insisting on Nicaraguan racial democracy. As we have seen, these were key aspects of the culturalist perspective held by most of the well-educated Creole elite during this period.

Eleven days after Sujo's response appeared in *La Información*, *La Prensa* published the key germinal piece in the Creole paradigm linking Mestizo racism with internal colonialism. Robert L. Johnson's “¿Es nicaragüense nuestra Costa Atlántica?” (Is Our Atlantic Coast Nicaraguan?) (1976:2) dropped like a bomb on the Nicaraguan intellectual scene. What seemed to many Mestizo intellectuals to be its treasonous content provoked a wave of articles and commentary about the Coast published in *La Prensa* over the remainder of the year.

Johnson stated that there was a racial problem in Nicaragua that pitted the small portion of the population that was white (the *criollos*) against Nicaraguans of color (*La Prensa* [June 23, 1976]):

... the whites, descendants of the Spaniards . . .

... do the *criollos* [whites] intend that the country be their exclusive property?

... the national budget is totally for the benefit of the white race, nothing is left for the Mestizos, Indians, blacks, and Miskitu of the country?

He also claimed that Costeño blacks in particular were suffering at the hands of those from the Pacific: "As we are human beings equal to you, we the Costeños feel that we have over us Nicaragua's boot." Much like the culturalists, he stated that the Pacific *criollos* were denying Atlantic Coast Creoles the right to practice their culture: "It is necessary that the government of the republic take Bluefields into account and give it the place that it deserves within the Nicaraguan reality, beginning with respect for our religions, our languages, and all our traditions."

Like the culturalists, he also claimed that the culture of the blacks was English culture and that it was actually purer than the Spanish culture, which those from the Pacific claimed to be practicing. This was a clear insinuation of black-English cultural superiority similar to that found in Brautigam Beer's work: "We blacks of the Atlantic Coast, although humble and poor, received from the English the culture of that country. ... the *criollos* have not been capable of giving the Spanish culture to the other races, reserving it as an exclusive privilege of those who have the capital, the politics, and the religion."

For Johnson the result of the cultural colonialism of those from the Pacific was a series of other abuses: "the authorities do not speak our language and we have to resort to interpreters to make ourselves understood in our own country." He departed totally from the culturalist paradigm in his assertion that the problems between Costeño blacks and the people of the Pacific were based on racism. He went on to claim that this racist situation was actually worse than that afflicting U.S. blacks, because in the United States the phenomenon was recognized and steps were being taken to do something about it:

As much as they talk about the U.S., I am pleased to say that with all the bad things that are happening to blacks there, things are going much better than here; at least they are looking for solutions to the problems. Meanwhile, in our situation there is slavery without chains. A hypocritical slavery that drowns those who have the double misfortune of being born black and, worse yet, Nicaraguan "citizens" where a white minority exploits like a wrung rag our wretched humanities.

In what was perhaps the most shocking aspect of the article for nationalist Mestizos, Johnson compared the situation of the Atlantic

Coast with that of Belize. With this maneuver he managed not only to criticize the relationship between the Coast and the Pacific portion of Nicaragua but also to imply the desirability of independence for the former. He stated that visiting Belizeans were horrified when they saw in the Coast an example of what was likely to happen if they were absorbed by Guatemala. They would have to "abandon their language, their religious freedom, and their English civilization full of rich and healthy customs that make [them] feel very proud of having inherited them."

He took the analogy one step further by reaching back into the annals of Creole protest and stating that

it was those of us from Bluefields who were the ones who made a testimonial document recounting all that had happened to us since President Zelaya incorporated the Coast into Nicaragua: the commission obtained similar documents from Colón, Panama; Puerto Limón, Costa Rica; and altogether they were presented to the English government to save Belize from falling into the claws of Guatemala.

This was read in Managua, as Johnson surely knew it would be, as a treasonable act. An unprecedented companion editorial by *La Prensa's* editorial board refuting Johnson's article and published alongside it characterized the statement as "calling for ... the subjugation of our Coast, Puerto Limón, Colón, etc., like Belize to the British Empire, which is an outrage."¹⁵

I have been unable to locate anyone who admits to knowing who the author of this extremely controversial and provocative article was; Robert Johnson was undoubtedly a pseudonym. As we shall see, however, the positions the article adopted and the seeming contradictions it contained were so characteristic of those of an emerging sector of Nicaragua's Creole community that I have no doubt that it was written by someone closely associated with it.

As I have already pointed out, the article shared much with the hegemonic culturalist position through its identification with the English and its simultaneous claims of cultural marginality and superiority. In other ways, however, it was very different. There was an identification with diasporic blackness, and, in fact, the loaded name "Creole" was never used to refer to Costeño blacks; only *negros* was used. There was a clear invocation of the communal black experience of racial terror, that is, slavery and contemporary racism in Nicaragua. There was a call not only for cultural pluralism but also for the recognition of the

Nicaraguan nation's racial pluralism and the demand for an end to racism. Johnson's solutions were black cultural autonomy and equity in a racially and culturally plural nation.

I have been unable to find Creoles willing to defend completely Johnson's position in the pages of either *La Información* or *La Prensa* during this period. Tobie's piece on neocolonialism and racism was reprinted in *La Prensa* later in the year, as well as his commentary about an infamous poem by Fernando Silva about Bluefields blacks, which he condemned for "hate of the black race."¹⁶ Other Creoles, however, played off the radical quality of Johnson's statement to lend credibility to their more reformist positions. In an example of this tactic, Conservative representative to the National Assembly from the Coast Stanford Cash, a Creole from Bluefields, addressed that body as follows (1976):

An article was published in the newspaper *La Prensa* . . . with the signature of a respected citizen of the Department of Zelaya . . . that I consider to be a clear and authentic reflection of the resentment and bitterness of this preoccupied citizen. As a natural reaction, other articles in turn have been written . . . on the basis of the criteria of the first article, with which I am in complete discord. . . . However, if we do not take rapid and effective measures, it is not a remote possibility that one or more other Mr. Johnsons expounding on problems will emerge, which will not be healthy for the country.

Indeed, there was a growing movement in Bluefields composed principally of young Creoles who shared many of Mr. Johnson's opinions. The paradigm of Mestizo internal colonialism and racism had maximum expression in this social movement of the mid- to late 1970's, which culminated in the organization of the famous SICC (Southern Indigenous Creole Community).

SICC members did not publish their political ideas in the local or national newspapers. The organization was aimed much more at Creole self-improvement than at publicly lobbying the power structure for change. Therefore, there are few materials available to give us an idea of the organization's political discourse. Thus, the brevity of my presentation of the ideas of the Creoles involved in the group is not an accurate indication of the group's importance.

The primary moving force behind SICC from its beginnings in 1975 to its demise in exile in Costa Rica and Miami in the late 1980's was the organization's longtime president, Miss Jenelee Hodgson. Miss Jenelee was perhaps the outstanding Creole charismatic figure of her time. She attended the Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano from 1970 through

1974, where she overlapped with some of the Creole pastors who were involved in nationalizing the Moravian Church. She credits her experiences there, especially reading black figures like Fanon and Martin Luther King, Jr., and a course on black culture given by noted black Costa Rican writer and activist Quince Duncan, with radicalizing her views on Creole racial identity. On her return to Bluefields in 1975, she began teaching at the Moravian High School, newly under Creole control, and working with the young people's group at the Baptist church of which she was a member (interview, 1995): "I went home all pumped up. I felt sure of myself. I knew who I was. I wasn't ashamed of myself. I was proud to be black. I was wearing an Afro just as big as Angela Davis'." When she got back to Bluefields, Miss Jenelee claims, she found people ashamed to be Creoles and of their blackness and afraid to publicly remember their history:

We formed UCCOD [United Committee for Community Development] for that reason—the Spanish people did look on us like we were nothing . . . And when I came back then I was with this black push. I said, No, No, No, No! We are not no minors here. Get this thing off! You are important! You are who you are! And afterwards they said I was racist. We had to build the confidence in the young people that they were important. And I used a phrase that I learned in Costa Rica . . . "Black is beautiful and if you doubt it just look at me." That was one of my phrases. . . . That was a movement in the United States also. "Black is beautiful." That stuff was catching and we were right in—we got in the spirit of the times.

Working first with the Baptist Young People to make the Sunday school classes the latter taught to younger children more relevant to the Creole experience, Miss Jenelee soon led them in other directions. The Young People's meetings became a kind of Christian political reading group. They began reading about and discussing such things as black history, Coast history, and Liberation Theology. Sometime in 1976 Miss Jenelee and a number of her young followers organized UCCOD. This enabled them to begin working with young members of the Creole community from other religious denominations and age groups. Miss Jenelee in her position as a teacher at the Moravian High School was able to influence and bring into the group Moravian young people as well.

The focus of the group quickly became the recompilation of Creole and Coast history. They began interviewing Creole elders about the group's history. Memory of the heroic exploits of Gen. George Hodgson and the Twenty-five Brave was revived. These personages and events became symbolic of the emerging process of revitalization of Creole

pride and identity (Gray n.d.). Miss Jenelee also made an effort to recruit young people she refers to as "bad boys." They were not affiliated with the established churches, but she tried to engage them in the work of gathering oral history. These young men were involved in the beginnings of the rasta movement on the Coast. They were listening to reggae, beginning to "dread up," and learning the culture from album covers and the few Jamaicans resident in the region. They became actively engaged in recovering history, especially that of the UNIA in Bluefields.

UCCOD also put on a Caribbean Festival as part of the 1977 celebration of Bluefields' birthday. The idea was a cultural event that would explicitly invoke and celebrate the Caribbean (black) roots of Creoles and their history in general. Group members contacted a large number of Creole organizations, including the Helping Sisters, Pink Tea Party, Rose Girls, Harlem Brothers, baseball clubs, the committees from the four Creole barrios, the Anglican School, and the Moravian High School (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995; SICC 1983). The cooperation of these elements of Creole civil society was unprecedented and of immense symbolic importance in forging a collective Creole identity. All Spanish speakers were excluded, as was the integrated, state-supported Colón High School. Mestizo Mayor Pedro Bustamante was deliberately not consulted (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995):

We said, "Okay, we are going to have this historical event to wake up the town. . . ." We did not allow not a Spanish person to sing and they were mad! I said no Spanish songs, no Spanish people; this is a Caribbean Festival. . . . It was done for an awareness of the people . . . that we had something to be proud of. We had beautiful girls. We had beautiful people. We had beautiful talent. We didn't have to always depend on having a queen as representative that had to be from a Spanish side.

There were several days of cultural and historical activities, including a calypso contest, dance presentations, poetry readings, traditional games and contests, to celebrate Creole identity. The proceedings culminated on the final day with a parade that wound through all of Bluefields and in which each group had a float. The high point of the parade was a float representing the personage and exploits of General George and on which the ten remaining members of the Twenty-five Brave were driven. This float was a presentation of persons and events purposefully enacted to elicit social memory of the organizational and military prowess of the Creole community on behalf of an implicitly separatist cause. Given the repressive nature of the Somoza regime, this

previously hidden memory could perhaps only have been presented publicly in the carnivalesque context of a parade.

This public enactment of the previously unspeakable was precisely the reason for staging the festival and for its great popularity and success. UCCOD was engaged in the uncovering and dragging into public discourse of the previously unspeakable—the history of an oppressed people. This is brought out by Miss Jenelee's recounting of the recovery of a historical document from an older Creole woman: "was a lady had it hidden between her mattress. I said why are you hiding it? She told me a long story that they were always afraid because Spanish people always . . . saying that they wanted to separate the Coast. So there was a repression, and I remember that there was time when you couldn't mention General George's name in Bluefields. People were still too afraid to mention it. They were scared" (interview 1995).

The overwhelming success of the Caribbean Festival and its oppositional character immediately positioned the organization as a political force. The Mestizo politicians interpreted this event and the group's other historical and cultural activities as political and threatening (Gray n.d.; Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995). UCCOD took advantage of this to begin to push an explicitly political agenda:

I personally went to Bustamante [the mayor] and I told him, I said, "Look now, Bustamante, our situation is this. We are reading the Altamirano [Harrison-Altamirano treaty]. Because we feel like every person on the East Coast should know what is stipulated in that document. . . . look at number 2. You want to tell me that you can't even leave two cents out of the money that you are collecting [from the seafood companies] . . . for us to have some development in this place?" I said, "No, man! See what this says." Well, he said, "That is not for me. That is for the Central Government." Oh, so it fall right in the same. By this time I had read in the book about General George that the same thing he questioned and fought about. (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995)

In 1977 a Young People's retreat organized by CASIM, the Moravian social action group, was held in Pearl Lagoon. Miss Jenelee and top members of UCCOD participated actively in this event and returned to Bluefields even more focused on the task of "discovering who they were." This meeting is mentioned by many of those involved in the early years of this movement as being central in its consolidation. It allowed the group to make contact with young people from throughout the region and to disseminate their ideas much more broadly. The UCCOD

participants left determined to create a more formal organization. The retreat also seems to have been important in gaining the support of important sectors of the Moravian leadership (Gray n.d.).

In 1978 SICC was formed from UCCOD. Ivan Cassanova and Hernan Savery, the latter a new teacher at the Moravian High School, had arrived from Managua and convinced the members of UCCOD that to create a more broad-based and effective organization that could attract funding from NGOs, they would have to model themselves after indigenous organizations like the enormously successful ALPROMISU. The young UCCOD members reluctantly agreed to do so, reforming themselves as SICC. The new group nominally included the Rama Indians, and a new board of directors was formed to include a majority of older and more well established Creole men. The major part of the new organization's funding came from CEPAD (Centro Evangélico por Asistencia y Desarrollo—Evangelical Center for Aid and Development), a national ecumenical social action organization that also funded ALPROMISU. Savery claims that SICC was in contact with a number of international indigenous and black organizations including Operation PUSH, the Organization of Black City Mayors, and Cultural Survival in the United States; the World Council of Indigenous People; the Costa Rican Indian Council; the Panama Indian Council; and the World Black Council based in Brazil (Hernan Savery interview, 1986).

The newly nationalized Moravian Church also heavily supported the new group. In fact, Bishop John Wilson and the first "native" superintendent of the Moravian Church in Nicaragua, Joe Kelly, were members of the original SICC board of directors. Many of the group's meetings were held in Moravian High School classrooms. CASIM provided the funding for many of the group's seminars and other projects. Some Moravian clergy were members of the organization, and they and other Moravian clergy took active part in the organization's events.

Surviving SICC documents are vague about the organization's goals. There seem to have been two areas of concern. The first was the promotion of self-knowledge of the cultures and history of the racial and cultural groups of the Southern Atlantic Coast in general; however, in practice, the group remained almost exclusively Creole in membership and focus. The second set of goals had to do with the development of the Coast's human and natural resources for the benefit of Costeños. In an effort to carry out these goals, a series of seminars were organized. For example, sometime in late 1978 or early 1979 a seminar on cultural survival was held by SICC and presided over by Miss Jenelee and two of the nationalizing Creole pastors. Amid the singing of hymns, praying, and bible reading, the three main sessions were entitled "Leadership," "Black Leaders," and "Historical Background of the Creole" (SICC n.d.).

Additionally, Miss Jenelee had a daily radio program through which the group's message was disseminated. SICC also strongly supported Ray Hodgson's (Jenelee's brother) mayoral bid in 1978, which was run partly on a black pride platform.

SICC also branched out into economic development projects. The group was particularly interested in encouraging agricultural self-sufficiency in the region and had projects in Pearl Lagoon and on an island in Bluefields Lagoon. In addition, they were interested in the forming of Creole leadership and sought funding for students to study outside Nicaragua. They hoped that the resulting group of well-prepared professionals would then be able to return and take over the leadership of the southern Coast: "there was a real feeling for us to be in control, so that is why we had this program of twenty-five. Each year twenty-five young people go away. By the time they get back here, they are ready to take this thing over, man" (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995).

SICC also began to make a concerted effort to organize older Creoles. This was accomplished by dividing the group in two by age. The older folks who joined SICC were relatively well educated and economically comfortable but not of the same status in the Creole community as those still organized in OPROCO. SICC's emphasis on Creole culture and history raised in them much higher levels of "national feeling and the desire to regain cultural values and historic recognition" than it had in the younger members (SICC 1983). These "feelings" would have explosive repercussions in the 1980's.

Almost from the beginning, SICC drew the attention of the state at the local and national levels and of the FSLN: "It is noteworthy that at the local level the group began to be suspected, given the national crisis of the moment: the continual progress of the FSLN in the war. Besides, there was an emphasis on auto-determination and the dignity and identity as black people. This frightened the local politicians" (Gray n.d.). The FSLN members who were familiar with SICC evidently also were concerned with some SICC elements' flirtation with separatist rhetoric and the group's seeming hostility toward Mestizos (Hernan Savery interview, 1986). By late 1978 the national political crisis had gotten so severe that many of SICC's activities were curtailed. Nevertheless, the organization survived the triumph of the Revolution and continued to operate in Bluefields through the early 1980's.

The Creoles of Bluefields, rather than being submissive in the decade immediately prior to the Triumph of the Sandinista Revolution, had actually been quite politically active. SICC's organization and activities were in many ways the culmination of these activities. The ideas of the members of this group provide important insight into the composition of Creole political common sense in the late 1970's and the early 1980's.

SICC's members were attentive to the issues of regional development and exploitation raised by other Creoles and were strong proponents of the concept of internal colonialism as a means of understanding the Coast's marginalized relationship to the rest of Nicaragua. They were strong advocates of social and economic development of the Coast to counteract the region's marginalized and underdeveloped position; however, strongly influenced by the anticolonial, civil rights, and cultural nationalist struggles of blacks elsewhere in the Diaspora, they had other concerns as well: "We respected OPROCO . . . a highway or a road to join Kukra Hill was necessary, but, my God, I mean there were other things to be focusing about" (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995).

The idea of Mestizo racism was central to SICC's analysis. Indeed, Mestizo racism was seen as the engine of the internal colonialism the Coast suffered. In response, SICC's principal focus was on the revitalization and repositioning of the Creole groups' cultural and racial identity as Caribbean and black—as fundamentally different kinds of Nicaraguans and proud of it. The idea of a glorious Creole past of black struggle against Mestizos and the Mestizo-dominated Nicaraguan state was a particularly strong aspect of the SICC paradigm. This in combination with the influence of black cultural and political movements outside Nicaragua was the basis for an incipient black nationalist perspective that activated the idea of Atlantic Coast independence. This in turn was reinforced by the suggestive idea of the Creoles' indigenous status and black identity. Finally, unlike the four other Creole social movements, SICC was much more a grassroots movement championing the idea of mass participation of the Creole community in the cultural reorientation of Coast society.

On the other hand, in many ways SICC defended the status quo. It was very closely associated with the dominant Protestant churches and therefore, despite its championing of Creole culture, firmly tied to basic precepts of Anglo culture. It was also a reformist movement in many ways. It launched no attack on such basic ideas as representative democracy and Western capitalism. In fact, it made no general criticism of the Somoza regime. The group was concerned with the general relationship between the Coast and the rest of the country. Somocista leadership was even embraced by many SICC members, especially as it was increasingly threatened by the Sandinistas. Moreover, because of its close ties to the Protestant churches, the SICC leadership was strongly anticommunist and therefore hostile to the icons of "communism," the Soviet Union and Cuba, as well as to the increasingly influential FSLN. This position emanated from the idea that communism was intrinsically antireligion. These sets of ideas would play a central role in Creole interaction with the Sandinistas in the coming years.

Creole Political Common Sense, Politics, and Identities

I turn now to the task of constructing an ethnographic description of Creole political common sense in the early 1980's. It is drawn from Creole historical processes, structural relationships, and contemporary political practices I have presented in this and previous chapters and from my own experiences during the latter part of this period.

My conception of "political common sense" is taken from Gramsci. It is a historically produced reservoir/repertoire of political practices and ideas that agents draw on in the generation of conjunctural political attitudes and activities. It is composed of (a) ideas and practices that are the production, past and present, of a group involved in struggles over political power relations and/or social transformation; and (b) ideas and practices appropriated from other groups as tactical maneuvers in that group's struggles or "for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination" (Gramsci in Forgas 1988:328, 333). As a result, political "common sense is ambiguous, contradictory and multiform" (Gramsci in Forgas 1988:346).

The content of political common sense is both tacit and expressed. Elements may shift from one level to another over time or may occupy both levels simultaneously among different sectors of the group of whose political common sense they are a part. In any given moment, a community's politics is generated from its political common sense. Specific conjunctures of economic, political, and other social relations stimulate the expression of sets of elements of political common sense. These elements tend to be arranged into some form of internal coherence (Gramsci's "philosophy"), usually by the community's organic intellectuals, and thereby can be recognized as related sets of ideas and serve as organizing ideas through which people understand their world and around which they formulate explicit political practices.

Creole political common sense, then, is an amalgam of related and contradictory, similar and disparate historically produced ideas and practices concerning the "natural" order of political relationships and practices. Creole politics is the conjuncturally expressed elements generated from the reservoir of Creole political common sense. Creole politics is in general also multiple, disparate, and contradictory. This is because (a) different sets of the elements of political common sense may be expressed as organizing frames simultaneously by differently situated sectors of the Creole community; and (b) as economic, political, and other social conjunctures change, different sets of the elements of political common sense are evoked as organizing frames for the formulation of Creole politics so that from one moment to the next the group's politics transforms.

Multiple, contradictory, and disparate historically produced ideas about Creole group identity also reside in common sense. Specific expressions of Creole racial/cultural identity emerge to salience from common sense as actors collectively attempt to locate themselves and are placed by others within international, national, and regional social/cultural orders in changing political, economic, and other social conjunctures. Expressed Creole identities and Creole politics are not necessarily coterminous; however, the former may constitute an identity politics when they become the mediating ideas among the organizing ideas of the politics of a particular moment.

Creole Racial and Cultural Identity

A key aspect of Creole identity formation is group boundary formation—the everyday marking of difference from members of other groups and similarity to other Creoles. In the early 1980's there existed in Creole common sense a historically produced complex of racial (phenotypic), cultural, social, and economic elements that were used by both themselves and others as markers to identify them as Creoles—members of a social unit distinct from other Nicaraguan racial and ethnic groups. These traits were by no means unitary or internally consistent; they exhibited the multiple and often contradictory character of Creole common sense in general.

Judging from the social movements of the late 1970's and my experiences in the early 1980's, Creole identity as expressed at that historical moment was constituted by three central markers: language, kinship, and racial phenotype. The most important index of Creole identity for both Creole and non-Creole Nicaraguans was the Miskitu Coast Creole language as first language. Miskitu Coast Creole exhibited a post-Creole continuum, and most Creoles could and did move easily between the basilect (farthest from standard English), the mesolect, and even the acrolect (closest to standard English) levels of Miskitu Coast Creole. As we shall see, the acrolect had a high status value for Creoles because they associated it with British and North American English. The basilect form of Miskitu Coast Creole was publicly denigrated by many Creoles; however, its use was recognized as the highest expression of group solidarity. It was the principal grounds on which Creoles distinguished themselves as a group even from English speakers. In my day, Creoles who had been away from Bluefields and living in the United States and who returned affecting some form of U.S. English were said derisively to *gringar* (speak like a gringo). They stood accused of trying to separate themselves from and elevate themselves over the rest of the Creole community. Despite the centrality of Creole language to Creole iden-

tity, there were persons born in Managua who could not speak Miskitu Coast Creole but who were considered by most Creoles to be members of the group. These persons, however, were black phenotypically and had surnames that placed them as members of historically Creole families.

In general, Creoles recognized the "black/African" phenotype as an attribute of their group, though almost all would claim that they were racially mixed. Blackness had been the central feature of Creole identity during the height of the UNIA movement on the Coast and became so again in the late 1970's for Creoles associated with SICC. The racialization of Creoles by Mestizos created a Mestizo stereotype of Creole blackness. The ability to speak Creole English and "black" phenotype were the determinant markers in the construction of Creole identity from outside the group, especially by Mestizos. There were many other Nicaraguans, however—Miskitu, Garifunas, and even some Mestizos—who shared this same phenotype and a substantial number of Creoles who did not.

For Creoles, group membership was determined in large part by kinship relations. They imagined the group as a web of interrelated families with core families rooted in each of three geographical areas: Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon, and Corn Island. All of these families were understood to be connected. Creoles were people who were members of or otherwise could demonstrate relatedness to historically Creole families. In my experience, one of the first sets of issues discussed when a Creole met a stranger who exhibited Creole potential either through language or phenotype was that person's family ties. I was continually asked if I was from the Bluefields or the Corn Island Gordons or was I from Mr. Tom's or Mr. Leo's side of the Bluefields Gordons. Since I was neither, my Creoleness was suspect.

As important as family relations were in determining Creole identity, alone they were not enough to establish that identity. For example, large sections of the Jackson family were not Creoles, even though Jackson was a Creole surname. The "Spanish" Jacksons were light skinned, spoke Spanish, and had Mestizo ancestry. For most Creoles they were Mestizos.

Within Creole common sense, there were additional sets of features used by Creoles to differentiate themselves from other Nicaraguan racial-cultural groups. Many had been more central to the marking of Creole identity in the past. The salience of each varied with the social context in which group identity was enacted.

Religion played a central role in Creole social life and identity. Historically, Creole Protestantism, especially membership in the Moravian Church, was a key oppositional symbol to Mestizo Catholicism and conferred high status through its association with "Anglo" culture. By the early 1980's, however, many Creoles were not Protestant

and many were flocking to evangelical Protestant churches, which were racially and ethnically mixed.

There were other cultural features in Creole common sense used at different moments by Creoles to differentiate themselves from other Nicaraguan racial-cultural groups. These included Creole clothing and housing styles, distinctive cuisine, and musical style and listening preferences. Apart from these racial, cultural, and linguistic categories, there were also socioeconomic indices of group identity in Creole common sense. Creoles continued to see themselves as the "civilized" elite of the Atlantic Coast's racial-cultural hierarchy. They took pride in the urban "middle-class" status they felt characterized them as a group, even though by most other standards they were poor—but genteel poor.¹⁷

Despite a strong process of identity formation as Creoles, members of the group also identified as Nicaraguan. The increasing strength of national hegemony over the preceding fifty years had enhanced their feelings of belonging to the nation. Thus, as we have seen, in the era leading up to the period under analysis, most demands for political rights were made by Creoles as a minority group within the Nicaraguan nation and to the Nicaraguan state.

Processes of racial and cultural identity formation create meaning beyond that associated with the drawing of boundaries and delimitation of groups. They are also fundamentally about the negotiation of position or status—the assignation of value to identities in national sociocultural orders. This suggests a process parallel to that of group boundary formation within the process of Creole identity formation. An important aspect of Creole identity politics has been the battle to position themselves against the competing, and often-disparaging, claims about them of contending racial, ethnic, and national groups in the ideologically constructed international orders of cultures, races, and national identities.¹⁸ This was accomplished through Creole ascription by others to and group identification with a set of crosscutting macro or transnational identities. These transnational identities have also allowed Creoles to position themselves against the constricting boundaries of the Nicaraguan nation.

Creoles historically inhabited three transnational identities simultaneously, with the popularity and salience of each varying historically. These three can be identified by the names that Creoles have called themselves. In this book I refer to the group mainly as Creoles, but it should be clear from the copious Creole political discourse I have presented that Creoles also refer to themselves as *Costeños* and blacks (*negros*). The elements of Creole identity I have presented are also used by Creoles as indices of these macro identities.

Creole black Caribbean diasporic identity is signified by their calling themselves blacks (*negros*). It is also signified by their production, appropriation, and identification with Afro-Caribbean and U.S. black music, their collective memory of racial abuse and violence, and their association with black diasporic political figures and movements (e.g., the UNIA, Kwame Nkrumah, and Martin Luther King, Jr.). Creole social memory of the group's origins continually names Jamaica and other areas in the Afro-Caribbean as a source of the group's ancestors. Creole recognition of their condition of economic exploitation and its similarity to the colonial and neocolonial positions of other blacks is the basis of a class component of black Caribbean diasporic identity. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, this black diasporic identity was the basis for the Creole social movement exemplified by SICC.

Creole Anglo diasporic identity was signified by their calling themselves Creole. This name historically connoted an affiliation with the British. Anglo diasporic identity was also evinced by Creole appropriation of and identification with metropolitan English and Anglo missionary Protestantism, with their appropriation of country and western music, and in general by their assertions of the Anglo roots of their culture. Creole social memory names England as a key origin source of the Creole people. The Creoles' relatively advantaged economic position in comparison with other Coast groups and the historical association of this privilege with Anglo capital is the basis of the class component of Anglo diasporic identity. Brautigam Beer's writings in the 1970's and the culturalist positions of some members of OPROCO are exemplary of this identity.

Creole indigenous identity is signified by their calling themselves *Costeños*. By the 1970's this name had taken the place of the politically taboo Mosquitian identity. Creoles were the people "indigenous" to the territory located in southern Zelaya, which included Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon, Corn Island, and the southern Coast to San Juan del Norte. From the Creole perspective, they were indigenous in the sense that they were the ruling native population before the arrival of the colonizing Mestizo Nicaraguan nation in 1894.

In addition to its regional referent, the name "Costeño" denoted Creole affiliation with indigenous Indian groups on the Coast, especially the Rama and the Miskitu. It further symbolized Creole claims to continuity of inhabitation from before the establishment of Nicaraguan national claims to their region. *Costeño* indigenous identity was transnational in that by the mid-1970's it was used by Creoles to identify themselves with the international "Fourth World" movement of indigenous peoples. Here again, Brautigam Beer's writings and the regionalist positions of OPROCO are based in this indigenous *Costeño* positioning.

Affiliation with the international indigenous movement was an important objective in the formation of the Southern Indigenous Creole Community from UCCOD.

Creole group identity and its disparate diasporic correlate identities—black Caribbean diasporic, Creole Anglo diasporic, and Costeño indigenous—when expressed often helped organize, legitimate, and make natural other sets of practices and ideas as they emerged to salience from the reservoir of Creole political common sense. The movement in and out of political salience of these sets of practices and ideas, however, which constituted Creole politics in a particular historical moment, was not necessarily isomorphic with the process of identity formation.

Creole Identity and Populism

For analytical purposes, I have separated these other areas of Creole political common sense into two ideal type sets of component ideas and practices. These do not exhaust the range of ideas and practices that composed Creole political common sense during the period in question, but they, along with the varying and associated modalities of Creole identity, were the dominant motivators of Creole political expression. Though the ideal type model used here for heuristic purposes may seem to imply duration and stability and hence an essentialized notion of Creole political common sense, Creole common sense is multiple, ambiguous, contradictory, and mutable.

Historically, Creoles developed a tradition of resistance to what they perceived as their oppression as a group. Their perception of oppression and development of attitudes and behaviors of resistance were based on a set of political ideas whose expression during the early 1980's I call "Creole populism." This set of ideas emanated from the historical specifics of the Creole experience. Creole populism was preeminently the political assertion of Creole identity and racial, ethnic, and class solidarity in the face of oppression by and competition with other ethnic groups—that is, Creole identity politics.

Most of the components of Creole identity set forth in the previous section were important markers of that identity because they were exclusionary. As possessors of these elements of identity, Creoles had a strong positive sense of belonging to the Creole ethnic group as distinct from other Nicaraguan ethnic groups, and especially Mestizos. This differentiation was politicized as Creoles resisted perceived threats to their identity by other, "opposing" ethnic groups. Creole populism, then, was based in resistance: group advocacy and protection of Creole culture and position in the Coast's and the nation's social, political, and class structures. Since Nicaraguan Mestizos historically had been the

Coast ethnic group that was the most different from, and most threatening to, the Creoles' position, the latter's identity-related political ideas and practices were preeminently concerned with power and rights vis-à-vis Mestizos.

Creoles believed that, by virtue of their historical position of sociocultural and economic superiority, they should play a leading role in the determination of the affairs of the Atlantic Coast. They further believed that they had the right to be *the* dominant ethnic group (socially, politically, and economically) in their indigenous area, where they traditionally had been the majority population: southern Zelaya and particularly Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon, Corn Island, and the southern Coast to San Juan del Norte. This thirst for political power stemmed not only from the perception that such power was "justly" theirs, but also from the belief that such power was necessary to preserve their right to live as Creoles (i.e., to worship in the religion they wanted, to speak their own language, and so on). These rights, they believed, were threatened by a nation dominated by a different and unsympathetic ethnic group.

Creoles felt that, because they had not been able to exercise political control in these areas since the Reincorporation, they had been discriminated against and oppressed by the Pacific-based, Mestizo-dominated national government. They saw this situation as a consequence of Mestizo internal colonialism and ethnocentrism or racism. Creoles also did not fully accept the political aspirations of any of the other Coast ethnic groups. Such aspirations were considered invalid because Creoles saw other ethnic groups as inferior competitors who discriminated against them.

There was also some resentment toward U.S. whites. This stemmed principally from the irrational exploitation of the Coast's nonrenewable resources by a string of large U.S. corporations. Also, adult Creoles had surprisingly common personal experiences with racism on the part of North Americans living on the Coast. In contrast to the response to Nicaraguan Mestizo oppression, however, resentment toward North American whites was usually aimed at individuals rather than at the group as a whole. The identification of U.S. corporations with economic opportunities, the U.S. government with charity and development money, and white missionaries with Christian good works and social services kept the negative perceptions of U.S. whites from becoming generalized.

Creole populism also exhibited a strong class content. Creoles were very concerned about the economic viability of the Coast and about maintaining or enhancing their position in it. Politically, this was manifested in strong Creole sentiment against what they believed was the Coast's status as a Nicaraguan internal colony. They claimed that

traditional national government policy was to appropriate the income from Atlantic Coast economic activities. There was deep resentment of Mestizo economic power on the Coast in the form of both business and government patronage. There was also despair over the chronically depressed condition of the local economy, a by-product, as Creoles saw it, of Mestizo mismanagement and parasitism. Many Creoles, especially those from the rural areas, championed local control by medium-sized producers, business owners, and professionals in opposition to the large-scale economic enterprises of North Americans, Cuban exiles, and Pacific Mestizos favored by the national government.

Creole populism was reinforced in important ways by other aspects of Creole culture. For example, Creole culinary practice, with its emphasis on root crops rather than corn, coconut oil rather than lard, and so on, was a constant source of Creole pride as well as derision aimed at Mestizos.

The account of Creole political history contained in chapters 2 and 3 demonstrates that forms of Creole identity politics that were the precursors of the construction of Creole populism in the 1970's and the early 1980's have been extremely important historically. Creole resistance to the Reincorporation, participation in the Garvey movement of the early twentieth century, continuous rejection of Nicaraguan Mestizo rule over the Coast, periodic armed uprisings, and insistence on the teaching of English in the schools were all proof of their historical appeal. In the period immediately prior to and after the Triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979, the Creole social movements of the time—the Creole pastors, OPROCO, black Sandinistas, and SICC—as well as Creole political writings demonstrate that Creole populism was the most consistently articulated element of the group's political common sense. Each of the three forms of Creole macroidentity was integral to different ones of the Creole social movements of the 1970's. Each of the former in different ways helped rationalize and legitimize different combinations of the sets of political practices and ideas that compose Creole populism.

Hegemony and Anglo Ideology

I have already noted the perception within Nicaragua during the 1970's and the 1980's that Creoles as a group were politically apathetic and inactive, blind to issues of their own oppression and that of those around them. I have also speculated that this perception stemmed from the fact that, during the thirty years prior to the 1970's, Creoles, for the most part, supported the Coast's political and economic status quo. During this period, most Creoles did not directly challenge the dominant

political and economic structures. Though they agitated against some aspects of their oppression, mostly through the Mestizo-dominated labor movement, this was generally done from within the system and without challenging its basic tenets.

This apparent anomaly can best be understood as a product of the role of precursor forms of Anglo ideology. In the early 1980's, Anglo ideology was a powerful facet of Creole common sense whose components Creoles acceded to and tactically appropriated for their own ends as a by-product of their historical insertion in a social formation dominated by Anglo others. As we have seen, in the century preceding the Triumph of the Revolution, the Coast was a North American imperial enclave of U.S. capital and a Nicaraguan internal colony. The agents and associates of these social forces (i.e., the missionary churches, the U.S. media, expatriate elites, comprador bourgeoisie, the Somoza regime, and so on), through their domination of the Coast's social processes, created the conditions under which Creoles internalized many of the political ideologies that legitimized that domination while simultaneously providing them the means to optimize their position within those power structures.

Chief among these hegemonic ideologies was that of "democracy." The particular version of it held by Creoles was similar to that favored by moderates and liberals in the United States and Europe. Its main components included liberal democratic principles such as freedom of religion, political pluralism, "democratic" electoral politics, "human rights," and limits to violence in the enforcement of sociopolitical norms. These were all assumed to operate within the context of capitalist rather than socialist economic systems. Individual property rights were emphasized, as was the possibility of upward mobility through personal effort. Material wealth was seen as one of the most important measures of personal well-being. Other related ideas included the absolute superiority of Western civilization, in particular, its "Anglo" version, and the assumed racial superiority of whites.

Creoles had also come to strongly subscribe to "anticommunism." "Communism" was understood by Creoles to be atheistic, antichurch, totalitarian, a threat to individual economic independence and viability, as well as economically irrational. Thus communism for Creoles was more than just a mistaken politico-economic theory; it was a moral abomination. Creoles were very hostile to movements and countries that were defined by U.S. whites as communist. This affected Creole opinions of popular movements in other parts of the Americas and the possible applicability of these to the Coast. Socialist Cuba and its leaders were particularly disdained.

Concrete manifestations of the hegemony of Anglo ideology within

Creole political common sense abound. Most important for our purposes, in the decade before the revolutionary triumph, the majority of Creoles backed the Liberal Party and the Somoza regimes. For them the Somoza governments were legitimate because they fit the Creole image of a democracy. Moreover, the U.S. government, U.S. representatives of businesses operating on the Coast, and the U.S. missionaries—the experts on such things—subscribed to that conception and backed the government. Creoles might have been pushed aside socially, politically, and economically by the representatives of these regimes, but they tended not to question overtly the legitimacy of their rule.

Creoles accepted U.S. white influence and presence on the Coast in its military, economic, and cultural manifestations. The U.S. government was seen as the outstanding proponent and defender of democracy. The United States was also seen as a paternalistic benefactor and savior of last resort in any serious crisis. The assumed superiority of U.S. whites meant that U.S. political positions were defended as correct whether or not Creoles could rationalize that correctness. Creoles resented being called “nigger,” being paid less for comparable work than a white person, or even having the U.S. Marines support governments that they were actively fighting against; however, they seldom questioned the “right” of the United States and its white nationals to be on the Coast and do as they pleased.

Historically, Anglo dominance played a decisive role in the development of all aspects of Creole culture. Anglo ideologies permeated all cultural domains.¹⁹ To give just two small examples of this broad and extremely important phenomenon: Creole ideas of their language (Miskitu Coast Creole) as an inferior corruption of “good” (i.e., British) English reinforced in important ways hegemonic ideologies about Anglos that existed within Creole political common sense and vice versa. As we have seen, from the Creole perspective, the high status of their ethnic identity derived from its close relationship to Anglo cultures. Creole Anglo diasporic identity, while it lent support to Creole populism in the early 1980’s, obviously also held the potential to reinforce and legitimize Anglo ideology.

Adoption of hegemonic Anglo ideology can be understood as a coherent tactical response on the part of Creoles. It explained and justified, and thus made acceptable, a system of power relations that lower-class Creoles as individuals felt powerless to change and from which Creoles, especially the elite, received considerable benefit. There were positive rewards for accepting it and the status quo it legitimized (jobs, social acceptance, higher status, admission to heaven, and so on) and punishment (jail, social ostracism, going to hell, and so on) for not accepting it. The inculcation of Anglo ideology was by no means an easy process. The

historical sources reviewed in this book bear witness to the protracted struggle by missionaries, educators, public officials, “civilized whites,” and so on, to get Coast people to think and act in a “moral,” “reasoned,” “modern,” “civilized,” and “correct” (i.e., Anglo) fashion.

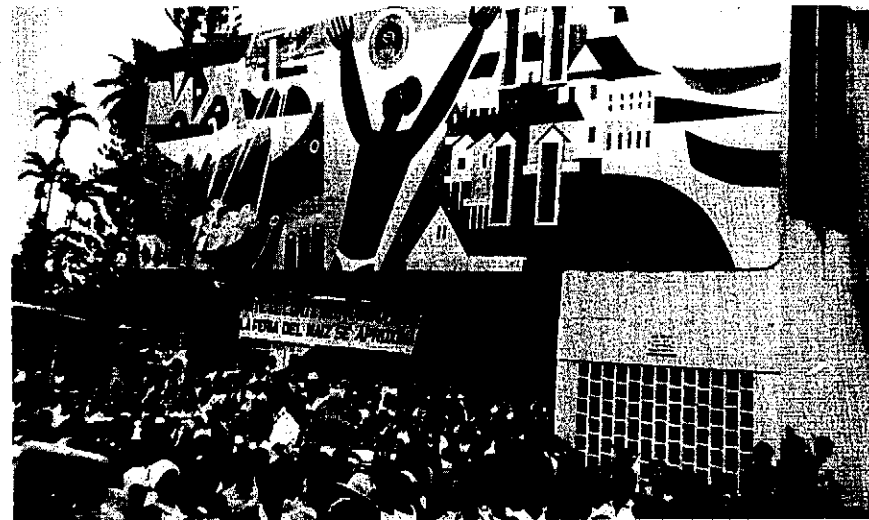
Creole political common sense, then, was a complex amalgam of ideas and practices that sprang from the specifics of Creole history and culture, Creole class and sociopolitical positions, and the hegemonic ideas of non-Creole ruling elites. Both Creole populism and Anglo ideology existed as ideal types within Creole political common sense.

There were congruences and reciprocal ideas between Creole populism and Anglo ideology. For example, the ideas of the superiority of Anglo culture and the Creoles’ Anglo diasporic identity played important roles in each. There were, however, also a host of dissonances between them. For example, at the highest level of abstraction, Creole populism advocated the assistance and protection of small local capital, whereas Anglo ideology supported free enterprise, including large extranational capital. The first insisted on the rights and value of Creoles as black people; the second posited the superiority and justified the domination of whites as well as Creoles as cultural whites. The first emphasized the need for popular, ethnically sensitive political control; the second was based on elitist power and party-dominated democracy. These dissonances manifested themselves concretely and became conscious in myriad ways.²⁰ The potency and transparency of Anglo ideology, however, as well as its congruence with Creole Anglo diasporic identity, kept the potential dissonances between the two sets of ideas from developing into conscious contradictions at a level of intensity that would force Creoles to seriously question Anglo ideology.

This is clearly demonstrated in the Creole social movements of the 1970’s and the early 1980’s in which the resistant elements of populism can be clearly identified. Their salience in this historical moment was the basis for Creole politics of resistance. Simultaneously, however, each of the elements of Anglo ideology was also demonstrably present in the discourse and practices of these social movements. Although in this particular moment they were not the organizing ideas of Creole politics, they were, nevertheless, as commonsense political notions of the community, sufficiently powerful to impede a transformational Creole politics. Consequently, during the 1970’s Creole resistance proceeded within the confines of Mestizo and Anglo power structures. As we shall see in chapter 7, this would change momentarily after the Triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979.



The Moravian Sunday School Hall and Central Church (*left*) and the Moravian High School (*right*) looking south along central Calle Comercial during the 1980's, Bluefields. (CIDCA-Managua Library)



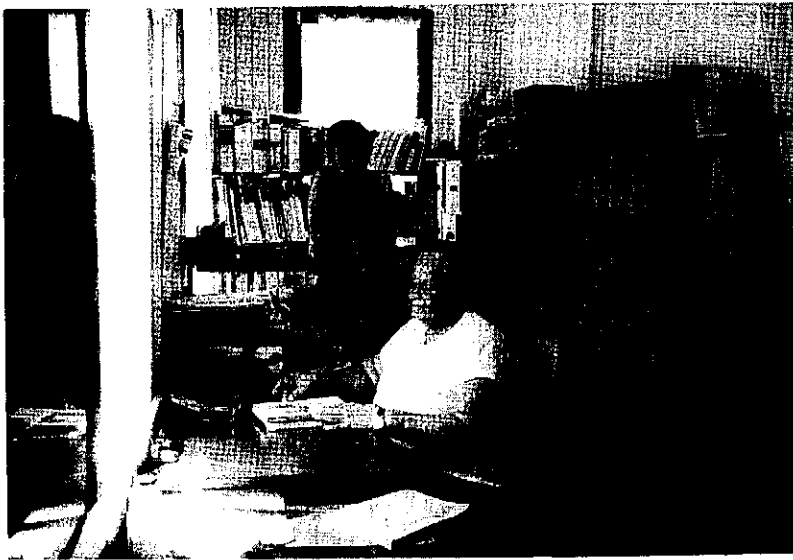
The controversial "Sandino Sun" mural, commissioned by the Sandinistas, on the *palacio*, Bluefields' seat of municipal government, early 1980's. (CIDCA-Managua Library)



Sandinistas campaign in Barrio Beholden, the largest of the town's black neighborhoods, early 1980's. (CIDCA-Managua Library)



Near Wing Sang's corner in downtown Bluefields, early 1980's, a famous spot for socializing and the interchange of community news and viewpoints. (CIDCA-Managua Library)



CIDCA-Bluefields Library with librarians Azalee Hodgson and Helen Fenton. It has become the center for the housing and dissemination of knowledge about Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. (Edmund Gordon)

7.

Creole Politics and the Sandinista Revolution: Contradictions

[After the Triumph of the Revolution] the Creole element was feeling out to get a position that sure is due the Creole . . . they [Creoles] figured . . . at the Overthrow, they would be the ones to be on the scene because . . . it's a longing then . . . we feel like we deserved to be on the first page of a situation . . . right after the Overthrow, because they are longing for that possibility.

—Lloyd Forbes interview, 1983

It is time to get tough. It is time for a real change . . . Organized as the "Floyd Wilson Task Force" we are inspired with the motivation for an anti-communist fight. We do not share separatism and express our repudance [*sic*] to an autonomy project issued by the Sandinista government. In a multi-ethnic region like the Atlantic Coast, the autonomy idea is only an infusion [*sic*] for ethnic contradictions . . . Communism is false, monstrous and malicious. It is the main cause for war, it is the father of dictatorship; the communists are masters of slavery and extermination of classes.

—FDN-UNO 1986

Most observers of the interaction between the Creoles and the Sandinista regime in the early 1980's alluded only to the tensions between the two parties and emphasized one or the other of two standard explanations of these difficulties. The few scholars who made reference to Nicaragua's Creole population during this period (1979–1985) ignored initial Creole enthusiasm for the Revolution. Moreover, they seemed unaware that this enthusiasm was based on the Creole community's perception that the Triumph of the Revolution would lead to the recognitions of their long-held racially and culturally based demands. These scholars, instead, asserted that the ensuing problems between Sandinistas and Creoles sprang from the latter's historical identification with Anglo oppressors and their position as the Atlantic Coast's middle class

(Adams 1981a, 1981b; Bourgois 1981, 1985; Dennis 1981; Rediske and Schneider 1983).¹ For their part, many Sandinista thinkers in the early post-Triumph years concluded from their own class analysis and anti-imperialist perspective that Creole opposition was based on the intrinsically pro-United States and "reactionary" nature of Creole political consciousness.²

Subsequently, the escalating racially/culturally based demands of the Miskitu and exposure to the racial/cultural problems and solutions of other "socialist" societies forced the Sandinistas to reassess their analysis of the difficulties on the Coast. By early 1985 the FSLN's understanding of its rocky relationship with the Creole community had shifted. The Creoles' culturally oriented political consciousness became the official Sandinista explanation of the problems they encountered in securing Creole participation in the revolutionary process. Internationally, the media and political activists on both the Right and the Left reached similar conclusions.³

All these observers of the troubled Creole involvement with the Sandinista Revolution were partially correct in their assessments of its dynamics. The elements cited as problematic in each of the two modes of explanation—the Creoles' "culturally" based demands and their "reactionary" political consciousness—were indeed troublesome. Taken individually, however, these analyses fail to provide a full understanding of the variability and complexity of Creole politics and, by extension, the Creole/Sandinista relationship.

First, these accounts were chronologically out of synch with the predominant modes of political expression in the Creole community. As I shall illustrate, in the early post-Triumph years, when Creole assessment of the Revolution could plausibly have been considered racially/culturally based, these observers employed the "Creole reactionary" explanation. Similarly, by the mid-1980's, when these observers utilized the "ethnic" explanation, so-called reactionary politics would have more accurately described the basis of the Creole response. The Sandinistas' misconceptions in this regard became a self-fulfilling prophecy. From the outset their handling of Creoles as "reactionaries" and their inattention to Creole racially/culturally-based desires created the conditions for the emergence of the very pro-United States, "anticommunist" politics of which they had erroneously accused the Creoles.

Second, and perhaps more important, such explanations, with their emphasis on monomorphic forms of Creole political consciousness, did not recognize the shifts in the elements of Creole common sense that served as the organizing ideas through which Creoles understood and formed attitudes toward the Revolution. The inadequacy of these observers' explanations was the product of their superficial understanding

of the ambiguous, multiple, and contradictory character of Creole political common sense and its generative relationship to Creole politics and identity. The scant consideration given to Creoles' concrete experiences of the social transformations triggered by the revolutionary process only deepened the shortcomings of their explanations.

In this chapter I argue that close analysis of Creole politics during the period from 1979 through 1985 reveals that both Creole interpretations of and attitudes regarding the Revolution were not static but changed rapidly and markedly. The majority of Creoles initially favored revolutionary change and only later viewed it unfavorably. Their interpretations were not based on a single internally consistent political consciousness. Instead, they explicitly articulated and employed both Creole populism and Anglo ideology in their interpretations of the revolutionary process. The interpretive significance (saliency) for the Creole community of each of these sets of elements shifted over time in response to the dynamics of economic, political, and other social conjunctures, including modifications in the revolutionary process itself.

I have found that immediately after the Triumph, Creoles organized an identity politics around the ideas of Creole populism in which their black Caribbean diasporic identity was central. In this politics Creoles enthusiastically accepted the Revolution as the key to realizing their utopian vision of a return to Creole dominance in southern Coast society. Subsequently, a social conjuncture formed in which Creole hopes for achieving their group aspirations were frustrated, the country's military and economic crisis deepened, the United States opposed the FSLN and labeled it "communist," and Creoles experienced the Sandinistas' mistrust. In this conjuncture, Anglo ideology emerged from common sense and eclipsed Creole populism as the predominant set of ideas around which Creoles organized their politics. In this new politics Creoles rejected the Revolution as "communist" and longed for a past when U.S. power assured the "stability" and "prosperity" of the region. Though Creole Anglo diasporic identity played a role in this new politics, in general, it was not an identity politics inasmuch as the ideas of Creole identity were peripheral to it.

My analysis indicates that at the height of their predominance, each of these sets of organizing ideas was *experienced* by a majority of Creoles as standpoints from which to mobilize their politics. Lived as centered politics, these ideas had real material effects as such. Nevertheless, during the period when one of the two sets of organizing ideas was predominant, the other set did not disappear but remained a part of Creole common sense. At any particular moment, the tacit ideas of the majority of the Creole community were the expressed organizing ideas

of a smaller, differently positioned sector of the Creole population. Just as important, many of the same (often contradictory) ideas, though with different emphases, were utilized in the politics organized by both Creole populism and Anglo ideology. Consequently, despite in particular moments being experienced by many Creoles as monolithic and centered, Creole politics remained multiple and shifting.

This characteristic simultaneity of Creole political common sense provides a possible explanation for other observers' chronologically out-of-synch postulations regarding the basis for Creole perceptions of the Revolution. Ideas from the organizing frame (Creole populism or Anglo ideology) that were not salient at a given moment bobbed between the expressed and the tacit as they were mediated by the predominant frame; they thereby remained identifiable to those observers predisposed by their own interests and experiences to identify them. Hence the Sandinistas, influenced by dominant Mestizo representations of Creoles, saw reactionaries when Creoles themselves thought they were revolutionaries.

To substantiate these assertions, I have organized the chapter in the following manner. First I present a narrative of Creole politics from just before to a few months after the Triumph of the Revolution. This period marks the pinnacle of Creole enthusiasm for the revolutionary process and the predominance of Creole populism as the organizing frame for Creole politics.

Next, I describe the beginnings of the shift away from populism as the Sandinistas' policies frustrated Creole aspirations. This period of political transition is particularly illustrative of the multivalent and simultaneous character of Creole politics.

In the next section, I document the growing predominance of Anglo ideology in the Creole community after the civil disturbances of "Black September" and in the context of the economic and military crisis sweeping Nicaragua in the mid-1980's.

The chapter ends with a summary of the political transformations undergone by the Creole community during the first half of the 1980's and reviews the utility of my paradigm for their explication.

Populism and the Racial Struggle for Power in Bluefields

The Revolution Draws Near

In the final two years of the 1970's, racial tensions in Bluefields increased.⁴ Events unfolded that, when interpreted by Creoles through the dominant lens of Creole populism, smacked of Mestizo racism. First there was the bitter campaign for the presidency of the local chapter of

the Red Cross. The position was important, as the Red Cross was one of the few civil institutions that was relatively independent of either PLN or Moravian Church control. The two candidates were well-known Bluefields professionals. Cyril Omier was a Creole dentist, a Liberal, and a member of OPROCO; Moisés Arana, his Mestizo opponent, was a pharmacist and president of the local UDEL. At other historical moments, this contest might have been viewed in political party terms; however, the Creole community felt racially abused when its candidate lost.

A second series of racially tinged events revolved around the 1978 election of Ray Hooker, the son of powerful Creole caudillo Waldo Hooker, as dean of humanities at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) in Managua. This selection was opposed by the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER—Student Revolutionary Front), which was closely affiliated with the FSLN and favored a more "progressive" candidate. The controversy grew violent and the appointment was annulled. The Creole community, led by the faculty of the Moravian High School and SICC, saw the conflict in racial/cultural terms. To them a distinguished Creole had been denied a position of national importance because of Mestizo racism within the student movement. By association, the FSLN was implicated as well.

In response, the rejected dean withdrew from the UNAN and started a project for the development of a university on the Atlantic Coast. The Creole population, again led by the Moravian High School faculty, supported this initiative, which was financed and supported by the Somoza regime. Mestizo leaders and members of UDEL, the bourgeois opposition to Somoza in Bluefields, opposed the project as pro-Somocista. The struggle immediately acquired an interracial dimension: Mestizos opposed, Creoles in favor. The association of the local UDEL movement with Mestizo identity and against Creoles was strengthened as well.

Racial tensions rose during the following year, when a young Mestizo UDEL member addressed a student assembly in Bluefields (Eustace Wilshire interview, 1983): "While in the country the people are fighting and dying, the people of Bluefields are dancing like monkeys." The Creole community assumed that the monkey reference was to them and considered it a grave racial offense. The statement was widely recounted throughout the community and added to the growing feeling that Bluefields Mestizos in general, and those associated with UDEL in particular, were racists.

Though race relations deteriorated in Bluefields, the increasing political instability of the country and repression by the Somocista state during the late 1970's inhibited Creole political activity. By late 1978, SICC, which had been the most active Creole group, was cutting back on

its activities; however, during this period another group of Creoles that would play a major, though unlikely, role in the struggle for Creole empowerment began to emerge.

From the mid-1970's on, many of the increasing number of Costeño students attending university in the Pacific were radicalized through their involvement with the FER. These students also established a series of Costeño student organizations in Managua that were mostly social in character but that also aimed to promote the interests of the Atlantic Coast. In 1978 many of the more politically active decided to form the Asociación de Trabajadores, Estudiantes y Profesionales de la Costa Atlántica (ATEPCA—Association of Workers, Students, and Professionals of the Atlantic Coast). They planned for this group to be clearly political in its anti-Somoza objectives and broader in its membership than previous organizations. ATEPCA's membership grew to around forty-five, most of whom were Creoles. Miskitu students had a separate organization, which was affiliated with ALPROMISU. According to former members, ATEPCA's activities in Managua were severely handicapped by National Guard repression, which some have since claimed was brought down on them by a Miskitu informer from ALPROMISU. Nevertheless, during this period about fifteen loosely organized, mostly Creole ATEPCA members operated intermittently in Bluefields and traveled back and forth to the Coast from school and jobs in the Pacific.

While in Bluefields they agitated against Somoza and in favor of the FSLN in the Creole population. They planned a number of operations aimed at disrupting the everyday life of the town. Their objective was to foment the sense of instability and crisis being experienced in the rest of the country during that period. Most of their planned maneuvers were not realized; however, they were able to paint the town with the red and black of the FSLN in early 1978, burn part of the stands in the baseball stadium and paint the FSLN's initials on the outfield wall for opening day of the season, and turn an UDEL-sponsored mass for Pedro Joaquín Chamorro into a mass demonstration against the Somoza regime (Eustace Wilshire interview, 1983).

In the months before the Triumph, Bluefields was tense. Much of the city nightly watched the warfare raging on the Pacific Coast on Costa Rican television. Many nights young Creoles organized by those affiliated with ATEPCA exacerbated these tensions by randomly detonating contact bombs. Fears grew in the Creole community that the warfare in the Pacific would soon spread to the Atlantic Coast. These fears were heightened by the rumor that Somoza had authorized the bombing of Bluefields. Many young Creole men whose parents could afford it were sent out of the country in fear that they would be conscripted into the

National Guard. Simultaneously, Bluefields filled with former residents fleeing the unrest and warfare in the Pacific.

The ATEPCA members made considerable headway in their efforts to politicize Bluefields' population, especially among the Creole youth (Dexter Hooker Kaine interview, 1986):

At night we used to start meet up, basically in the black neighborhood with a lot of the guys them, but that would sit down and listen to you. Maybe possible that you don't have the spirit normally but with [unintelligible] you can discuss and you could teach a lot then . . . But those are the guys them that I start seeing that in the long run going answer. You know start doing. Okay, we start cutting all the wire up in the poles. You know, start doing like that. That some of them get even bored off it and switch off. And you know some more come in. But then we start classifying and seeing which one, even being [marijuana] smoker, which one going respond militarily in a moment.

Dexter Hooker Kaine (whose nom de guerre was Comandante Abel) was particularly adept at this kind of organizing. He had traveled to Costa Rica to meet with leaders of the FSLN, including Jaime Wheelock, and returned to Bluefields entrusted with specific political objectives. Abel seems to have been the only Creole activist operating in Bluefields who received direct orders from the FSLN. Working on the Coast during early 1979, however, he was isolated from the accelerating pace of the revolutionary process in the rest of the country and was unable to receive direct orders from his FSLN superiors. Abel and the largely Creole group of young men he was organizing decided to initiate their own military operations in the name of the FSLN. On June 28, 1979, after weeks of careful preparation, they attacked the U.S.- and Nicaraguan-owned PESCANICA seafood-processing plant situated on an island in the Río Escondido delta just outside of Bluefields.

The operation was carried out by sixteen men and without casualties. It was undertaken in part to assist the hundreds of refugees, Bluefields natives who had been stranded in Rama without food or medicine while fleeing the Pacific. After successfully taking over PESCANICA, Abel's group loaded liberated food, medicine, money, hostages, and heavy arms onto three company fishing boats already laden with shrimp, took three other speedboats, and headed up the Río Escondido to Rama. While making their escape, a National Guard boat arrived and fired on them; the attack quickly ceased when Abel informed the National Guard by radio that hostages, including the manager of the plant and several

foreigners, were on the escaping boats. A number of workers also decided to accompany the group on the trip to Rama. In fact, the company workers, many of whom were acquaintances of members of the rebel group, assisted the latter in their activities.

When the group reached Rama early the next morning, their reception was mixed. In Abel's words (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986):

The reception wasn't the best. . . . the same little fellows them [Sandinistas from Rama] wasn't the best because they was like a little envious. All Sandinistas there mostly, they who live in the town . . . a little enviousness about our weapons. We with M16 and they with 22 guns.

We spend the day and by night they took me up by up Cuapa to the *cuartel general* [the regional Sandinista headquarters]. I met Pancho [Luis Carrión] there. . . . When we saw each other it was different then. But when I get back to Rama all the guy them in jail. Seem like the Rama fellah assault them the night because they had dollars. Because what we did with the dollars just before I left, we left a little pusha [distributed some of the money] because we were planning to leave in a next two days for guerrilla fighting and it's not one man have that. We give a pusha. But then when they broke them they even find some grass on them. . . . Our guy was very mature . . . when they went after them the night there was a lot of shooting up and, well, they didn't answer the gun them because it was 22. And good say they didn't answer. It was a real mature act. And they spend the night in jail. Well, when we reach back the next day, well, we put everything back under control.

During the entire time the group spent in Rama, however, there was considerable tension between group members and the Rama Sandinistas (Eustace Wilshire interview, 1983). This tension was interpreted by Abel's group in racial terms (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986): "We had some kind of a little contradiction with that same feeling of Spanish and black . . . that is mostly the same Rama people . . . so what I was trying to do then was just don't get nobody's ill-feelings. . . . in Rama we had serious problems because racial problems arose between the people of Rama and those from Bluefields."

These racial problems challenged the "black Sandinista" position held by Hooker and the other ATEPCA leaders, that U.S. imperialism was the principal source of the racism Creoles experienced in Nicaragua. Such experiences of racial/cultural conflict between Creoles and Mestizos aligned with the FSLN continued and intensified over the course of the following months of social conflict and change. They had an

important impact on these Creole leaders' politics and the politics of their followers and of other members of the Creole community.

On the other hand, the Costeño refugees stuck in Rama greeted the group as conquering heroes. Word quickly spread downriver to Bluefields and surrounding communities of the operation's success, and boatloads of both Creoles and Mestizos eager to join the coming insurrection began arriving at Rama. By the time Abel and his troop were ready to go back to Bluefields, more than seven hundred mostly unarmed volunteers had joined them.

The original idea had been to stay in Rama only a couple of days then proceed downriver and form a base in the Pearl Lagoon area and from there prepare the liberation of Bluefields. This was never carried out. The group needed ammunition and antiaircraft weapons, which they were unable to obtain in a timely manner. Abel thought his raw troops needed two or three days of military training. He was promised some instructors from the *cuartel general*, but they never arrived. Time went by and the swelling group remained in Rama, although they became restive. Conditions were uncomfortable for the neophyte revolutionaries (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986): "it wasn't too soft, too good. A lot of contradiction. And then the same fellow them start get frustrated because, well, they need a toothbrush, then need a pretty clothes, they need a new pants. And you know those guys them just not doing nothing up there." Small patrols undertook a few missions, during one of which a member of the original fifteen blew off his big toe. The racial tensions with the Rama Sandinistas continued. Then just as they were getting ready to mount their move downriver, the *cuartel* in Rama burned to the ground, destroying all the group's weapons.

During the more than three weeks they remained in Rama, Abel formed an *estado mayor* (staff). This consisted of himself as head and Eustace Wilshire (whose nom de guerre was Shaft), another Creole ATEPCA activist who had joined them at Rama, as *político* (chief of political affairs). They also selected leaders from the Asociación de Estudiantes Secundarias (AES—Association of High School Students), a group composed mostly of students from the Colón school in Bluefields who had organized in opposition to the Somoza regime. This group was mainly led by Mestizos, but a number of Creole students were active members. They had carried out a series of strikes at the Colón school since 1977 and were engaged in other politicizing activities as well. They had made contact with the FSLN in the mines (commanded by Comandantes Henry Ruiz and René Vivas) but had lost that connection. After the success of the PESCANICA operation became known, they sent representatives to Rama to make contact with the Bluefields group there who were known to be operating under orders of the FSLN. From

this group, Charles Wilshire, Eustace's brother, Francisco López, Rubén López, and a third Mestizo were added to the *estado mayor*.

With the arrival and integration of members of this second group into Abel's group, this Bluefields revolutionary force became racially integrated at the level of both leadership and troops. It was clear to most, however, that Creoles were the dominant group within it.

In early July, Moisés Arana, the president of Bluefields' UDEL, and Gregory Smutko, an American missionary Catholic priest, arrived in Rama (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986): "a commission I think went up [to Rama] from here with Smutko and Arana, went up talking about we mustn't come war down here [Bluefields]. That the Guardia them want peace and so and so."

The contradictions, tensions, and jockeying for power that immediately emerged with this commission exacerbated the growing racial tensions in Bluefields. The Creole-led group in Rama, as the military force designated by the FSLN's National Directorate to take control of the Atlantic Coast, saw itself as the area's legitimate vanguard group. They suspected that Arana was trying to obtain this position for himself and the UDEL faction by negotiating the surrender of the Bluefields National Guard directly with the FSLN's leaders (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986): "He [Arana] basically claim mostly like he did wanted not to talk to us. [He wanted] to talk to Pancho [Luis Carrión] . . . Up there we done organize . . . an *estado mayor*. But Arana was more insisting to talk with a next level." Arana had in fact been in communication with the National Guard general and was planning to arrange their surrender directly to the FSLN National Directorate in Costa Rica.

Abel's group kept Arana in Rama against his will for two weeks, greatly exacerbating the enmity between the two groups. They told Arana that he was being held for his own protection. He may have been held to keep him from providing the National Guard general details about the FSLN forces in Rama; however, his interpretation was that "there was a desire for power, an ambition for power on the part of many persons who were interested that I stay in Rama" (Moisés Arana interview with Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983).

Then on July 18, the day after Somoza left the country, Abel and his group left Rama for Bluefields (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986): "in the morning before day a next Christian group went up there but with a next conception headed by Brother Ray, I think Thomas Kelly . . . and I think about three or four of them and say, well, you know, told us the situation were needed that we come down immediately and that's when we come down back." The members of this commission sent to facilitate Abel's group's takeover of Bluefields represented a number of important constituencies in the town's Creole community. Brother Ray Hodgson was

a Creole Pentecostal pastor, former mayoral candidate, future mayor of Bluefields and governor of the region, and Jenelee Hodgson's brother. Thomas Kelly became an important Creole leader of the FSLN. Erica Hodgson, an important local leader of the Conservative Party, was a part of the commission, as was Gayland Vance, a leader of the adult chapter of SICC. The participation of representatives of these constituencies in support of Abel's group had important implications for Creole politics in the immediate post-Triumph period.

Abel, the rest of the *estado mayor*, and about a dozen others left immediately for Bluefields to assume control of the town. Moisés Arana was allowed to leave Rama only after they had departed. They arrived in Bluefields that same day, a day before the FSLN took over the national government.

The situation in Bluefields at the time of the Triumph was indeed propitious for the arrival of the group from Rama. As the legitimacy of the Somoza government waned and the social order disintegrated under attack from forces inside and outside Nicaragua, so did Creole support for the regime. Most Bluefields Creoles thought that it was time for an end to the Somozas' rule. By mid-July the town's schools, state offices, and some businesses were closed. Supplies of food and other essentials were getting low. The town was overflowing with refugees from the Pacific. Creoles had grown tired of the uncertainty and tensions. Formerly repressed historical resentments against the Somoza regime and its functionaries as the embodiment of the colonizing Mestizo state gathered force.

On the other hand, many Creoles, influenced by the events described earlier, by the attitude of the churches, and by anticommunist propaganda (e.g., the Voice of America), were afraid that an FSLN victory would mean "Cuban-style communism" in Nicaragua and discrimination against them as a group from that quarter. Despite these concerns, by July 1979, the majority of the Creole community was optimistic about the possibility that a new government would aid the Atlantic Coast in general and Creoles in particular (Roberto Hodgson interview, 1991):⁵

People was just so enthusiastic. The seventeenth of July, when they heard that Somoza had turned over power and left the country, people were just crazy. Walked the streets and some piece of red and black flags are all over the place. Just a few minutes after when people heard that the vice-president [Urcuyo Maliaño] said but "I am going to stay." Ahhh! they tore down all the flags. They had even started pulling down the statue [of Somoza García] in the

park there and everybody just scattered. But of course two days after, when the vice-president really left for Guatemala, then things began again. The first days it was really chaotic, confusion.

Events of the following two months, however, had a lasting effect on Creole perceptions of the revolutionary process. The National Guard at Bluff and Bluefields had agreed before the Triumph to give up peacefully. After July 17, the day Somoza left the country, they remained in their barracks, as there was no constituted power in Bluefields to whom they could surrender. During these days of uncertainty, most of the top officials in the former PLN-dominated local government and a good part of the town's social and economic elite rapidly left the country by boat. Interestingly, all of the Mestizos in these categories left, whereas a good number of the Creoles remained, though they maintained a very low profile.

Who Are the Real Revolutionaries?

A power vacuum ensued. In most barrios, lightly armed civilian patrols were mounted to keep the peace. In the months before the Triumph a group of Mestizos led by a National Guard deserter and the Aragón twins (two local toughs) had engaged in a series of small military skirmishes with the National Guard in the famous Lara Swamp, a huge swamp outside of Bluefields. On July 17 this group occupied the Palacio, the major seat of civil, municipal, and departmental government in the zone, in the name of the FSLN. Members of the AES and a large number of unaffiliated individuals joined them there. These and other Mestizo leaders, including members of the UDEL such as Moisés Arana's brother Alfredo, met at the *casa cural* (rectory) and organized a *comité de defensa civil* (CDC—civil defense committee). This group and the National Guard, mediated by the Catholic bishop, entered into negotiations to take control of Bluefields (Wong López 1979).

Before the group from Rama arrived on the eighteenth, racial conflict had already broken out. Loyd Forbes, a longtime Creole union activist and an affiliate of the ATEPCA group, recalled what happened (interview with Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983):

I can remember when I . . . went into the Palacio . . . the Spanish element there didn't permit me to go into the Palacio, so I questioned them there on the spot . . . 'cause I was well known [as an activist] . . . so right on the spot I told them, "All right, if I can't come into this Palacio, I'm going to Beholden [the largest Creole

barrio] and organize a *cuartel* with some of the Creole people," and I did that. . . . I organized the *cuartel* in which I had the boys . . . we gave them some guns when we could get them . . . [those in the Palacio] were like, say a group of boys controlled by the Arana brothers . . . they had a movement that was . . . like only Spanish people involved . . . already I knew . . . like a racial conflict was getting shaped up.

When the Creole-led group arrived from Rama, it was joined by many of the radical Colón students who had been in the *palacio*, the Creoles from the Beholden commando, and other sympathizers; however, they evidently rejected the aid of some of the CDC and sent them back to the *palacio*. The National Guard surrendered to the group led by Abel, which then occupied the former National Guard headquarters and barracks in Bluefields (the *cuartel*). On July 19, the FSLN took control of Nicaragua. The *cuartel* group under the direction of the *estado mayor* created in Rama and led by Abel moved immediately to establish control of much of the Coast in the name of the FSLN. Delegations were sent to key locations such as the Bluff, Corn Island, and Pearl Lagoon to assume control. In Bluefields the group moved to take control of the various command posts; however, as Dexter Hooker relates, they immediately ran into problems (interview, 1986):

[We] found a little commando up there like for the black people in Beholden. . . . then the Spanish people them—but without no political idea more like *maliant* [bad guys]—some [were] guarding COPESNICA [a fishing company]. The Spanish people commando [was] up in the *palacio* and I think one was up by San Mateo by the graveyard and then the Guardia them down here [*cuartel*]. Nobody touch nobody.

So we had to come in now to broke that. But we don't even know what kind of situation. So what we did we march down to the *cuartel* to see reaction. Okay. The reaction was peaceful . . . and we come and officially review and we take over . . .

I went up to the fellow [those in the commandos], "Okay, now we don't have any commando. This is one structure." But I think there is where the biggest feelings came in—we came in traditionally. I feel like is the same, you know, that, well, *the black now throw off the Spanish. I feel like there is the . . . essence of the problem . . . I mean they [Mestizos] had a lot of control now and these other people [Creoles] just going to come over them . . . I mean the situation wasn't the best.* (Emphasis added)

The group in the *palacio* left the building but soon returned, angered that they had not been called on to form part of the military leadership represented by those in the *cuartel*. They accused the *cuartel* group of improperly instigating tensions in Bluefields for the sole purpose of grabbing power (Moisés Arana interview with Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983):

[After the fall of Somoza] . . . everything was tranquil, production continued tranquilly, the Guardia did not leave the *cuartel* . . . civilians guarded the town; frankly, there was tranquillity. . . . the problem arose when the *compañeros* who had carried out the operation at PESCANICA arrived. That is when the uneasiness started . . . then different positions were taken . . . That is when a strange process of struggle. I maintain that it was a struggle for power more than anything else; the process of enmity . . . and the group that came from Rama grabbed the power.

The *palacio* group further accused those in the *cuartel* of fomenting racial division by advocating "black power" (Eustace Wilshire interview, 1983). They refused to leave the *palacio* and claimed that they were the legitimate representatives of the FSLN in Bluefields. This claim was reinforced by the arrival of a young woman and man from Chontales with the FSLN representative from Rama. They claimed to represent the Estado Mayor del Frente Oriental Roberto Huembes. This group was nominally in control of Chontales and Zelaya Sur for the FSLN and was commanded by Luis Carrión (Moisés Arana interview with Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983):

In a few days an FSLN delegation from Chontales appeared with a *compañera* and *compañero* whom I know. They told me that they had brought a list of eight persons to form the Regional Government of Bluefields, the Junta de Reconstrucción, . . . they came and told me that it was very important that I read this list and tell them which persons on it I was interested in or not and what we could change. I said I was grateful, I headed the list . . . I said . . . it's preferable that you place on it a pastor from the Moravian Church so that you have variety and not only racial but religious.

The *cuartel* group claims to have not been consulted about the Junta's composition nor were any of its leaders placed on it. They denied its legitimacy and did not allow it to exercise power. Moisés Arana recalls the racial character of this conflict (interview with Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983):

Then began one of the saddest things that I have had happen in my life. They began to say that it was Moisés Arana who is making the Junta and that it is Moisés Arana who is racist and that he is against the blacks and then something arose . . . something against . . . to the extreme that they . . . raised, I remember, a placard which said "*Arana and Somoza are the same thing*". . . .

After this . . . I couldn't, for fifteen days, do anything in the Junta. They blocked me totally. There were problems with Abel. There were problems with other *compañeros* who were with Abel . . . and then the famous Kalalú appeared. (Emphasis added)

A report from the ill-fated Junta to the national *estado mayor* of the FSLN written in the midst of crisis over Creole opposition to its formation described "a meeting in the Old Bank barrio where militia-men associated with Abel and colored politicians . . . cried and swore that they would struggle against what they interpreted as a continuation of white domination over blacks, almost like Somocismo without Somoza" (Wong López 1979).

Both the *cuartel* and the *palacio* groups claimed to represent the FSLN. In some sense, both probably did, since each was in contact with and sponsored by a different tendency in the FSLN's politico-military organization. At this early date, the provisional central government was not fully operational and coordination was deficient.

Power struggles between politico-military factions in other areas of Nicaragua during this chaotic moment were not uncommon. Unfortunately, the particular history of racial/cultural social divisions on the Atlantic Coast transformed this struggle for local power into a full-scale racial/cultural confrontation. Many Creoles in Bluefields believed at the time of the Triumph that they would be the ones to take political control of the area. By the time of the Triumph, most Creoles supported the Sandinistas' efforts to end the Somozas' rule and had begun to resonate to portions of the former's political discourse. Moreover, during this period of social dysfunction, a "utopian project" based in Creole populism had begun to take form in the Creole community. The emerging social movement that embodied this project was articulated by Creoles with the Sandinista movement.

As the Creoles understood it, the Revolution had been fought to return power to the people. To their minds, they *were* the people of Bluefields and by rights should govern it, thereby returning to their deserved positions of local political power and socioeconomic prominence. As Moisés Arana's and William Wong's (a Chinese/Mestizo member of the *palacio* group) statements indicate, the perceived racism of the Mestizos

was read by Creoles in that moment as antirevolutionary, the reincarnation of Somocismo.

The *cuartel* group, as the champion of the Creole community's utopian project, had its overwhelming support. Dexter Hooker, Eustace Wilshire, and other black Sandinistas who were the leaders of this group actively recruited Creoles to their cause and their vision of the Revolution on the basis of racial/cultural identity and rights. A Creole former OPROCO member and Somoza supporter in a 1985 conversation told me that while he was lying low in his house during the unstable period just after the Triumph, he remembered Wilshire walking through the streets of Cotton Tree with a rifle over his shoulder and rallying the Creole community. He called for them to come out of their houses: "Creoles of Bluefields, this is your chance. Come out and defend your rights."

The community recognized the black Sandinistas as their leaders and their ideology as the leading ideas in the broad social movement that coalesced around the struggle to consolidate Creole power; however, individuals who were members of other political groupings of Creoles were active in this social movement as well. Key roles were played by Creoles who were associated with SICC, such as Ray Hodgson, Gayland Vance, and Hernan Savery. They saw in the movement a response to the internal colonial racism of Mestizos, which had been the object of their ire.

The bulk of the *cuartel's* military personnel, however, were very loosely organized young men from the Creole barrios. They were generally from families of lower economic status and not well educated. Some, like Berto Archibald, who became the *cuartel* group's commander at the Bluff, were from families closely associated with SICC. Some of these youth were associated with the emerging rasta group that would become known as Culture for I.

In general, the members of the *cuartel* troop were stereotyped by the bulk of Bluefields' population as low-status "vagos," or "bad boys." This slightly disreputable status was most often symbolized by their reputation as marijuana smokers. Many of them did in fact smoke the drug, which had become quite popular among Creole youth during the mid-1970's; however, the smoking of ganja was only one aspect of an oppositional cultural identity that was emerging among this sector of the Creole community.

The consumption of and identification with commodified black diasporic culture on the part of Creole youth played an important role in the emergence of an oppositional racial politics during this moment. Percy González, one of the leaders of Bluefields' rasta community, remembers how reggae and rasta entered Bluefields and became popular as a mode of cultural expression for Creole youth (interview, 1991):

Well, round in '77, '78, a lot of Jamaican fisherman used to be around here fishing up Tasbapaunie and they used to come here to Bluefields, some of them did even living at Bada house, and the same time the music start come in, the reggae music, . . . well, we first start check out the dancing because when they used to have them house party and one or two of the fellow used to go and dance, he dance in a way that nobody used to dance round here, . . . everybody still used to dance soul music, . . . but we see them man them, so we ourselves start picking up the style and dancing when we go party . . . from there then it start popular.

Ganja smoking by Creole youth as part of this cultural complex had begun a few years before the Triumph; however, the wearing of dreadlocks, the icon of rasta and its black nationalist cultural politics, began only after the Triumph at precisely this moment of racialized identification and conflict. Most of the young Creole men identified closely with the newly popular "dread" culture of Jamaica and the Anglophone Caribbean. An important aspect of this identification was a growing pride in blackness and a firm rhetorical stance against racism. Their attempt to consolidate Creole control of the Coast under the auspices of the Revolution fit well with this emerging cultural politics.

Kalalú, Black Power, and Conflict

As the power struggle between the *palacio* and *cuartel* groups intensified, an African Costa Rican, Marvin Wrights, locally known as "Kalalú," arrived in Bluefields. He had entered Nicaragua with the Brigada Simón Bolívar, a military contingent of international supporters of the Revolution. Kalalú was a gifted orator and charismatic leader. He soon became an adviser to the *cuartel* group. He brought with him a brand of Trotskyist black nationalism new to the city and was instrumental in inciting the Creole population to demand what they believed to be their rights (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986):

Most of the people mixed up in those moment were black people, as I said before. So then it's like a feeling of identification through being black towards the Revolution. And they get a next bigger shove from the moment that the Simón Bolívar came down and they has a guy that in history we didn't know a guy black could talk and talk politics to them like Kalalú. . . .

Kalalú call the black workers and start organizing unions and syndicates and with this pretty way of talking, you know, the black people really started.

On the other side, the Bluefields Mestizo community came to the support of those headquartered in the *palacio*. In the face of *cuartel* group accusations that they were racists, those associated with the *Palacio* claimed that "we do not have anything against blacks, only against a particular group." They accused Abel of being incapable of managing the military affairs of the region. They also were enraged by what they saw as Creole racism and high-handedness expressed as favoritism toward blacks at the expense of Mestizos in the distribution of food and weapons. And in the gravest accusation, they claimed that the *cuartel's* Creole youth reproduced the authoritarian practices of the National Guard they had replaced.⁶

Rasta leader Percy González remembered the tenure of one of his friends as commander of the Bluff (interview, 1991):

Well, I did went gone visit Archie one of the time. You know he did—I laugh because we is brethren . . . I see some time his attitude, how he act. He come back different. Not different, well, he the same. But toward next people he act like he want to show, well, demand respect or something. For instance he used to—a black guy have a lot of beard, he had a big beard, strapping. People come want to talk to him. He got a sitting table and he got a lamp flashing down in the visitor face and him behind there and talking to you rough—all under pressure then.

The most fundamental criticism had to do with what Mestizo leaders felt was the low intellectual and moral standing of the Creole group. The fact that many of these Creole youth smoked marijuana was the basis of the most vociferous and long-lasting Mestizo criticisms of this group.⁷ Concern with groups' intellectual and moral capacity clearly was associated with Mestizo commonsense assumptions about the natural character of blacks, especially poor ones.

As the situation deteriorated, interracial-cultural animosity became the order of the day in Bluefields. Members of the opposing groups were afraid to venture into each other's *barrio*. Racial tensions in the local high schools, particularly the Moravian High School, became acute. Various juntas organized along racial/cultural lines and failed. In frustration, most of the members of the biracial group of radical Colón students separated from the *cuartel* group and began to organize the Juventud Sandinista (Sandinista Youth) and the *comités de defensa civil*.

The conflicts finally came to a head. Sectors of the *cuartel* group organized what they intended to be a peaceful demonstration of the Creole community in the town park facing the *palacio* to demand that the *palacio* group give up its pretensions. The latter got wind of the plans,

assumed it was a military attack, and took up defensive positions. That same afternoon, the Brigada Simón Bolívar convinced leaders of the *cuartel* group that those in the *palacio* should be evacuated by force if necessary. The *cuartel* leaders led an armed contingent to the *palacio* to carry this out.⁸ Family members and others in the Mestizo community turned out to support the *palacio* group. A chaotic scene ensued in which the large civilian presence precluded military action (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986):

That first concentration . . . Kalalú then even turn it. Because the thing with the Palacio then it start take a taste of like, black. The black commando down here and the Spanish commando there.

. . . I think were one of the biggest manifestation we ever had in Bluefields and worse black people. And not coming out to say let's inquire. You know, hollering and talking. But, basically, it was a manifestation of the racism.

The crowd milled about from 5:00 to 9:00 or 10:00 PM, freely exchanging slogans, threats, epithets, and fists. What happened next is not clear. Apparently, one of the armed *cuartel* Creoles became overexcited and shot himself accidentally. There are, however, many people who still insist that the two sides exchanged gunfire that resulted in deaths. The shooting scattered the crowd, which was then kept out of the area by the combined *cuartel*/Brigada Simón Bolívar troops. An ultimatum was given to the poorly armed *palacio* group. By 11:00 PM the latter had abandoned the *palacio* and were dispersed. Creoles were, however briefly, the rulers of Bluefields.

Again, at this point, during the first weeks after the Triumph, most sectors of the Creole community were solidly behind the Revolution as locally led by black Sandinistas. They acted according to their understanding of how revolutionaries were supposed to act: they called each other *compañero*; they initiated worker control in the local sugar mill; young Creole men joined the militia and their families supported them by providing food and moral support. Creoles began collectively to rebuild their neighborhoods. They participated in the local *Comités de la Defensa Sandinista*, organizations designed for communal self-help and defense of the Revolution.

Managua Descends

It was inevitable, however, that the conflicts in Bluefields would bring a response from the FSLN in Managua. In fact, before the *palacio* group

was disbanded, it sent a delegation of five to Managua to denounce those in the *cuartel* as undisciplined separatists and to ask for assistance. Shortly after the *palacio* group was forcibly disbanded, the FSLN's national *estado mayor* dispatched a high-level military commander, Comandante René Vivas, and a contingent of inexperienced troops from Puerto Cabezas to Bluefields to restore order. They immediately assumed military and political control of the town, disarmed the *cuartel* group, and deported Kalalú (Dexter Hooker interview, 1986):

And then René Vivas came down . . . he came down and immediately brought some people down from Cabezas and now basically the black people what was in the commando was taken out of it . . . by the time I get back, well, all the conception of the commando—when we reach, you know, where all the black people—you know the commando was something popular. By the time we reach back it was all changed then. But it changed because essentially all the black man was out of it and then the Mestizos them took over completely . . . And I think where there were a lot of feelings come back to these fellows that, you know, were recognized as marijuana smokers or, you know, let's say, socially low level and then these other guys them that had, let's say, a little intellectual capacity just take away the gun and say, okay, thank you, you go home now and now you come you take this because your moral status is different and I didn't believe in that then . . .

With the taking out of Kalalú and taking out all the structure [the *cuartel* group's *estado mayor*]. I think then the black spirit then just turn right back. Because . . . the first days them in the black neighborhoods the people them was working.

Most Creole leaders of the *cuartel* group were either sent to Managua or out of the country for further education. A Bluefields Junta for Municipal Reconstruction was formed and its membership approved at a public meeting held in the town park. The junta included representatives of the two ethnic groups and the major religious denominations.

The Creole community, however, was not satisfied. Creoles had not gotten the power they thought they deserved. The fact that Mestizo representatives from Managua came to Bluefields and imposed a solution that, in their eyes, denied them that power was not appreciated. Some of the members of the *cuartel* group declined to turn in their arms. Secret meetings were held to plan action. The Creole barrios, which had briefly burst into action for community uplift, turned sullen and restive. The *cuartel*, which had been a center of Creole social activity but was now in the hands of troops from outside Bluefields, was shunned.

In response to these developments, the national Sandinista *estado mayor* sent a contingent of battle-hardened special troops headed by Comandante William Ramírez from Managua. They rapidly brought the situation under control by totally disbanding the *cuartel* group. They became the first non-Creole military contingent to undertake an operation in the black barrios.

Though there were no clashes, the operation had a negative impact on the community. Subsequently, the Government Junta for National Reconstruction asked Comandante Ramírez officially to oversee Atlantic Coast affairs, relieving Comandante Vivas.

Just prior to this, the FSLN had appointed Comandante Lumberto Campbell as military commander under Comandante Vivas. The people of Bluefields thought that Campbell, a Creole born in Bluefields, had been killed in combat during the revolutionary struggle. On his arrival, he was emotionally received by the Creole community, which hoped that through him their cultural aspirations would be realized. Their enthusiasm was dampened, however, by the fact that Vivas and then Ramírez, Mestizos from the Pacific, were his superiors and the supreme authorities on the Atlantic Coast.

The foregoing events occurred within the space of about five weeks (July 17 to approximately August 24, 1979). This short period of time was crucial in the formation of Creole perceptions of the Revolution. At the Triumph of the Revolution, Creoles were swept away by a utopian vision of Creole autonomy, and Creole populism became even more central to the organization of Creole political ideas and practices. Initial Creole optimism that the Revolution would restore their rights as a group waned, though, as intercultural tensions heightened and Mestizo Sandinistas from the central government seemed to support other Mestizos in local, racialized power struggles. Basing their evaluation of the Revolution on the organizing ideas of Creole populism, many Creoles began to see the Revolution as a Mestizo project that could not serve their community's interests.

The failure of the social movement led by the black Sandinistas to consolidate control of the local state apparatus had negative implications for their ideological leadership of the larger Creole community. These leaders clearly understood the racial character of their struggle for power with local Mestizo Sandinistas. For a brief moment, they had been able to forge a new popular politics by articulating the revolutionary politics of the FSLN with Creole populism.

Most of the black Sandinista leaders, however, remained loyal to the FSLN, even after having lost their bid for local power. To align their politics with the Sandinistas, for whom the problems of racial and

cultural difference within the nation were considered divisive, and to rationalize their continued loyalty to the Revolution, struggles around racial/cultural issues internal to Nicaragua had to be subordinated to those centering on national liberation and class struggle. "Black Is Beautiful but . . .," a poem written in the early 1980's by Carl Rigby, the preeminent Creole poet of the period and a longtime black Sandinista, is exemplary of this repositioning:

black is beautiful—but . . .
 not this de kind a way:
 in the *back*
 they still put you to bed
 with their diversionist talk about black:
 that there is neither white yellow nor red
 :the *ones* who do us this is because they handle the bread
 . . . but it's time to wake-up now
 :and we know why and we know how . . .
 after all—who the hell you think built the color-wall!?
 :black is no class—
 let's not be an ass!
 :there is no time to stare at the clock
 ...:come on! :find your flock
 and you will see that the poor and working class a people
 can only be as high as a steeple
 if we take-down those who are setting us back
 :and this goes for white yellow red and black—

In a 1983 interview with me, Eustace Wilshire, who had been *político* of the *cuartel* group, also clearly emphasized class issues over those of race and culture: "speak of demands not of Miskitu, nor of Sumu, nor Rama, nor Creole, nor Mestizo . . . we speak of a general revolution of poor people." He went on to state that Creoles who claimed that the Revolution was racist did so because they did not understand their own history of racist oppression by foreign whites and were in other ways beholden to them:

There are some blacks who are saying that this struggle [the Revolution] is racist. They are taking up the customs of outsiders. I can agree that blacks are black no matter where you take them, but I can assure you that there are black reactionaries. . . . Here in Bluefields the blacks do not know their history . . . they do not know their roots, they do not even know why they were slaves, there are those who do not want to accept this theory and who

do not know why they have to defend the victory [of the Revolution] . . . the black still does not know how he got here to Nicaragua . . .

What is more, if we look at the black sector, 80 percent have family members in the U.S. Therefore, they cannot be against the United States because monthly the dollars come.

The rejection of a political discourse and practice that articulated with Creole populism—the set of ideas that dominated Creole political perspectives during this moment—cost the black Sandinistas their leadership role in the social movement they had initiated and led. It also meant that their political ideas and those of the FSLN in general were increasingly seen by the Creole community as marginal to the latter's interests as a community.

Despite this growing unease, many Creoles continued to be active in revolutionary work such as neighborhood cleanup and improvement, child vaccination drives, civilian militia, and, later, the literacy campaign. As an example, even after the arrival of René Vivas, Hernan Savery led a number of SICC members (a group that would soon become very critical of the Revolution) who had volunteered to travel to Honduras to recover stolen fishing boats for the Revolution. The rapid expansion of the revolutionary state meant that many Creoles, who were the best-educated Costeños, were able to obtain jobs in the expanded bureaucracy. The Revolution also promoted a number of popular initiatives that seemed to promise rapid economic expansion. Percy González, remembering this period, commented (interview 1991): "For the beginning, it did really look bright round in the '80's, '82, things did look bright. 'Cause, for instance, I did get on a job little—round in '80. Used to go buy grains, rice in hull up the communities. The bank did lending money to the farmers them. Things did working on." Subsequent events, however, many of which were associated with the newly consolidated revolutionary government's efforts to transform the nation's political and economic institutions, slowly fed the Creoles' growing disillusionment.

The Beginnings of a Shift

Sandinista Policies Have Their Effect

Immediately after the Triumph, the public sector expanded rapidly in Bluefields as the revolutionary government created new institutions to implement its programs. The domination of the economy by foreign capital and the Somoza family had been far more complete on the

Atlantic Coast than in any other region of Nicaragua. As a consequence, confiscations of these interests' properties created a state sector on the Coast far larger than anywhere else in the country. The central government, fearing the Costeños' lack of revolutionary consciousness and desire for autonomy, sent a trusted Mestizo cadre from Managua to take over top positions.

Three instances of this practice were especially controversial. The national government appointed Comandante Ramírez minister of INNICA, an institution created in 1980 to coordinate all government activities on the Atlantic Coast. He also took responsibility for the regional FSLN party structure. Creoles thought that Comandante Campbell was the appropriate choice for these positions.

The new central government placed the fishing industry, the economic backbone of southern Zelaya and a traditional Coast activity, under the control of Mestizos from Managua who had little practical experience to recommend their appointment. Creoles took pride in being the experienced originators of this industry, and this snub was deeply resented.

In a particularly undiplomatic move, in 1979 the revolutionary government replaced a highly respected Creole medical doctor, Roberto Hodgson, with a young Mestiza doctor from Managua as head of the region's Department of Health. The Creole doctor had been appointed to the position only months before and was not notified of the change before it occurred. This move had a strongly negative impact on Creole participation in government-sponsored health campaigns. Roberto Hodgson described these events and their effect on the community to me in 1991:

Just two months after, a group of younger people [Ramírez and Campbell] came in from the Pacific . . . and I was removed . . . They sent a letter naming Martha Medina . . . She came from León. She was doing her social service, and she took over. . . . She was sent down, and I was in Managua . . . getting off materials . . . It was a move from Managua. . . . That happened in September of '79.

. . . most of people started making a big noise about it. . . . most of the young leaders . . . they made up a letter with signatures.

The government also assigned many Mestizos from the Coast, whom they considered more supportive of the Revolution than Creoles, to positions of responsibility. In 1978, the year before the Triumph, Mestizos held 62 percent of the leadership positions in state institutions, major political parties, and large privately owned companies in southern Zelaya, while 31 percent were held by Creoles. By 1980 the FSLN had

moved to consolidate its hold on local political and economic power. There were no longer opposition political parties openly operating in the area, and all the large private companies had been nationalized. As part of this process, the percentage of Mestizos in leadership positions in the area (state institutions and mass organizations) rose to 78 percent while Creoles held only 22 percent of these positions. In 1985, at the end of the period covered in this book, despite the FSLN's policy at that time of involving more Creoles in the leadership of the region, 70 percent of the top leadership positions were held by Mestizos and 30 percent by Creoles.⁹

Overall, then, the rising expectations created by Creole identification of their utopian project (based on Creole populism) with that of the Revolution became increasingly incongruent with the realities of Sandinista policy. Creoles resented Mestizo occupation of politically and economically important posts. They could not understand how Mestizos from the Pacific with little or no knowledge of the Atlantic Coast could be hired instead of Creoles equally or more qualified for state jobs. What the Creole community considered to be extravagant and discriminatory salaries and social benefits received by these interlopers only exacerbated the situation.

Relations between the Protestant Creole churches and the Sandinistas were also problematic during this period. Church leaders felt threatened by large-scale Creole participation in revolutionary activities. In particular, Creole participation in the Sandinistas' organized health and neighborhood cleanup campaigns on Saturdays and Sundays significantly reduced church attendance in the period immediately after the Triumph. Church leaders saw their power over the Creole community beginning to slip away. As a result, some church leaders were among the first and most influential critics of the Revolution.

The ethnic tensions brewing in the Moravian High School in the weeks following the Triumph worsened this situation. The school became an institutional focal point for Creole dissatisfaction with the revolutionary process. Many of the Creole teachers and students held, and voiced, sentiments critical of the Revolution. Two of the leaders of SICC, which had not been publicly active since before the Triumph but was nevertheless viewed with trepidation by the Sandinistas, taught at the high school. The school was also a place of employment and, to a certain extent, refuge for former OPROCO members who had also been PLN members and who would not or could not leave the country, as the Somocista Mestizo elite had.

As a result, the Moravian High School was a target of Sandinista suspicion. This was greatly resented by Creoles and cast by them in racial terms. For many years, Creole memory of this hostility was

symbolized by a statement attributed to Miss Angélica Brown, a member of SICC and at that time a teacher in the Moravian High School. During an open meeting between local Sandinista representatives and the Creole community in the Moravian High School gym, she is reported to have asked Sandinista representatives: "Why when the blacks have meetings do you worry and when the Mestizos have meetings you do not?" For Creoles the statement neatly summed up Sandinista identification with Mestizos in an atmosphere of racial/cultural antipathy as well as Sandinista opposition to Creole political organization.

In the final months of 1979, the Creole pastor and director of the Moravian High School was denounced by the revolutionary government as having been an informer for the Somoza regime. Shortly thereafter he left Nicaragua. The Creole community alleged that he was not given an opportunity to defend himself, and the government never presented public proof of the charges. Bishop John Wilson recalled this series of events and their impact on the Creole community in the following terms (interview with R. Hooker and Alicia Slate, 1983):

Well, William [Ramírez] was really upset. He didn't even take Rev. Miller [the alleged informer] into account. And I pleaded. I said, "Well, William, give the man a chance to defend himself" and he said no he wouldn't. So, well, Rev. Miller got very upset and I guess a little nervous because this thing was a shock . . . So, well, the verdict was that he have to leave the country between so many days. Well, he came home, told his wife, and they all broke down. Then they packed their things and tried to get out the country; they went the Monday. I accompanied them to Managua and ever since the Moravian community has been pressuring me to do something about Rev. Miller . . . So up to the present there is this sort of ill-feeling towards, I guess, the government for not having clarified and not having met the demands of our people . . . because the proofs have not been shown to the people, they sort of have lost confidence and, well, they sort of blame me, too.

Bishop Wilson's memory of the Miller episode points up another crucial aspect of the deteriorating relationship between the Sandinistas and the Moravian Church. A number of the nationalist and modernizing Creole pastors were relatively sympathetic to the revolutionary process and attempted to play a mediating role between the Sandinistas and the Creole community; however, as these relations worsened, they were caught between these forces. Because the Sandinistas were unyielding in their demands for the recognition of revolutionary power, the conciliatory moves of these pastors were registered as capitulation by the Creole

community. This greatly reduced their influence within the Nicaraguan Moravian Church structures and with their congregations. This in turn undermined attempts at reconciliation between the church, the Creole community it represented, and the revolutionary state.

During this same period, the pastor of Bluefields' Baptist church was jailed when his refusal to participate in a neighborhood cleanup campaign degenerated into a heated oral exchange between him and some overzealous soldiers. Though he was released as soon as Comandante Campbell got word of his arrest, sectors of the Creole community were outraged that one of their religious leaders should suffer such an indignity.

The Sandinistas' major concern, though, was with the Moravian Church. They saw it as a competing power on the Coast, one that disposed Costeños to the divisiveness of racial/cultural identity and politics and identification with imperialist forces. In a secret memorandum written by the vice-minister of INNICA probably in early 1982, this comes out clearly: "The structure of the Moravian Church, its form of organization and pastoral activity, fertilizes the terrain of separatism and by its own character and historical antecedents deepens the indigenious communities' ethnic problem. . . . the training of its cadre and its international links are related to this objective" (Samarriba n.d.).

These and other problems between the Creole churches and the revolutionary government contrasted with the good relationship that existed between the latter and the Catholic Church in the region. In the same internal policy memo, Comandante Samarriba recommended that the Sandinistas work to "take away the social base of the Moravian Church and pass it over to the control of the Catholic Church," where, from his perspective, the Sandinistas had "more political control." The contrast between the positive Catholic Church/Sandinista relations and the latter's problematic relations with the Moravians further fueled the growing Creole belief that the Revolution had little respect for them as a people or for their institutions.

There were other aspects of the troubled interaction between the Protestant Creole churches and the revolutionary government that had negative implications for Creole/Sandinista relations. One of the guiding principles of the Revolution was the state's responsibility to provide its citizenry with basic social services (i.e., health, education, and welfare). After the Triumph, the revolutionary government rapidly moved to assume this responsibility, which had previously been in the hands of the churches. In fact, in the half decade before the Triumph and in the years immediately following it, the newly nationalized Moravian Church had significantly stepped up the scope of its social program through CASIM. The revolutionary state's increasing arrogation of

control in these areas effectively reduced church power. Comandante Samarriba recommended the elimination of CASIM and measures that would "prohibit the development of economic social activities by churches and limit them to religious activities." Members of the Creole community began to feel that the Revolution was attempting to eliminate the church or at least to limit its power.

In sum, the Protestant churches, and particularly the Moravians, were one of the few venues where Creoles could exercise political and economic power in the region. Weakening or eliminating them implied loss of power as a racial/cultural group. The Sandinistas recognized the centrality of the Protestant churches, and particularly the Moravian Church, to the exercise of local racial/cultural power and worked to undermine it. In the words of Comandante Samarriba, "It is impossible to resolve the ethnic political problems and the maneuvers of the counterrevolution without dismembering and controlling the Moravian Church in all of its dimensions." The Sandinistas, to my knowledge, never embarked on a policy as radical as Samarriba's recommendations; however, Sandinista policy and practice weakened the power of the Protestant churches and, as a consequence, Creoles felt power slipping from their grasp.

To these woes were added a continual series of circumstances and events that seemed to reconfirm Sandinista racial/cultural insensitivity and eroded Creole support for the Revolution. For example, the Sandinistas under the direction of INNICA, which was established in 1980, began a national campaign to publicize their goal of modernizing and incorporating the Atlantic Coast. In newspaper articles, on murals and placards, and in advertisements across the country, they referred to the Coast as the "Awakening Giant." This infuriated Creoles, even though the metaphor seems to have originated in the Creole community in the 1970's. Creoles felt that they were already awake, already more advanced than the Mestizos, and that the phrase as used by the Sandinistas was denigrating. A huge mural painted on the face of the Palacio by the revolutionary government depicted a black man seeming to worship the rising sun painted in the likeness of Sandino. This not only invoked the awakening metaphor but also seemed to Creoles both anti-Christian and to advocate black subservience to the Mestizo Sandinistas.

SICC began to reemerge in late 1979 and stepped into the leadership position in Creole politics left vacant by the abdication of the black Sandinistas. As those who had been involved in the Creole community's post-Triumph effort to seize power disengaged or were pushed out of their positions, they and those leaders who had remained inactive began to meet privately at the Moravian High School. In November CEPAD invited four SICC leaders to attend the meeting in Puerto Cabezas

between Daniel Ortega and indigenous leaders from which MISURASATA emerged. Jenelee Hodgson, Hernan Savery, Angélica Brown, and Iván Cassanova attended. For a variety of reasons, some of which I discussed in chapter 5, Ortega and the Sandinistas were not interested in having the Creoles participate in the indigenous organization he helped form (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995): "We saw then that the Sandinistas had no intention of ever taking us into account. . . . No, he [Ortega] never did recognize us. And when we claim him . . . 'what about us?' . . . he said, 'Don't even mention the Creoles' . . . We were very insulted." Ortega even went as far as to state that black racial politics had no place in the revolutionary process (Anonymous 1979b).

By early 1980 SICC began to meet again publicly, organizing seminars and festivals and renewing plans for the education and development of the Creole community. Its members soon became embroiled in the divisive controversy over the Revolutionary Government's literacy campaign. Some of its leaders were centrally involved in agitating for and then planning the campaign in English. According to Hernan Savery, most of the SICC members were enrolled in the original campaign in Spanish as teachers; however, most resented the initial Sandinista position that all Nicaraguans should be taught to read and write only in Spanish. They were further incensed by the Sandinistas' reluctance to initiate a literacy campaign in English and were infuriated when it was canceled before it had reached its goals. SICC's Creoles viewed this as racial discrimination.

Creole political positions, led by SICC, regarding their inclusion in MISURASATA and the literacy campaign indicate a continuing preoccupation with racial/cultural issues correlated with Creole populism through late 1980. The organization was simultaneously beginning to focus on issues more closely articulated with elements of Anglo ideology, however (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995): "Gayland Vance was coming down from Old Bank and he said to Erica Hodgson, 'Erica, how this thing look like it going left.' Erica said, 'Damn if it gone left' . . . it not going, it gone."

Some SICC leaders, like Jenelee Hodgson, seem never to have been sympathetic toward the Sandinistas. Her reservations, and probably those of others who were deeply involved in the life of the Coast's churches, had much to do with their association of the FSLN with communism and what they understood to be communism's opposition to religion.

Creoles in general were also very uneasy about the confiscations of private property that the Sandinistas initiated after they stabilized the revolutionary state's control over Bluefields. Before the Triumph, the story circulated in the Creole community that in Castro's Cuba if you

had a pair of shoes one shoe would be taken away and given to someone else. In addition to the fishing plants and other large enterprises, some of the property of former Somocistas, particularly those who had left the country was confiscated.

The idea that socializing property was a mandate of the revolutionary state was so strong that some Creoles redistributed their wealth without being directed to do so. Renowned boat captain Alan Stephenson (interview, 1991):

If you had four boats you had to get rid of three. Well, it really wasn't official. But it was some kind of a decree they had here, and if you had a taxi you couldn't have a store and whatever business you had. If you had a truck besides, you had to sell that truck to the driver . . . And we start to have a little bit of timidity and you know we didn't argue the point. And, really, it didn't sound too bad at the time.

Not everyone was as open as Mr. Alan. George Berger (interview, 1991): "What did make them [Creoles] mad from the beginning is the same thing. Taking way people's things, people property, people house. That was the main, main, main thing that about what everybody was vexed about. . . . Those are the things . . . that make the people them get against them."

There was a large demonstration in Bluefields in early 1980 to protest the confiscation of a pawnshop and the practice of state appropriation in general. Most of the confiscated property, however, belonged to Mestizos or foreigners, and the bulk of the leaders of and participants in the demonstration were Mestizos. Nevertheless, the idea that the FSLN was moving toward communism was gaining currency and was viewed as a threat by sectors of the Creole community. The community's commonsense ideas that I have grouped under the rubric "Anglo ideology," though not the predominant organizing ideas of Creole politics during this period, influenced their thinking about the Revolution.

In 1980 the revolutionary government asked the Cuban government for aid in the reconstruction of the country. The Cubans sent technicians, medical workers, teachers, and so on, a number of whom came to the Atlantic Coast. They were to fill the positions left vacant by technical personnel who had left the country after the Triumph, particularly in the local hospital and fishing plants. Some were also to teach in rural communities, where there was a severe shortage of qualified teachers. The Creole community reacted negatively to the Cuban presence.

Many Creoles worried that the Cuban teachers would give their children a communist rather than a Christian education. Others feared that the aid workers threatened their economic position: they thought Cuban teachers would take the jobs of Creole teachers; Cuban medical personnel, those of Creole medical personnel; Cuban technicians and boat captains, those of Creole captains and technicians in the fishing industry; and so on. Workers in the fishing industry and teachers were particularly vocal. A number of their leaders went to Comandante Ramírez to protest the situation but either left dissatisfied with his response or were turned away. The situation became very tense. Miss Jenelee remembered (interview, 1995) that "things were getting hot now, the unrest is rising . . . August, September [1980], and whew! it was rising. The people were talking. People were up and down. People were commenting they couldn't stand it. So many were getting information about the Cuban captains and losing their jobs. The teachers were going to be substituted for Cuban teachers." SICC played a key role in the mobilization of the Creole population (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995):

We [SICC] were meeting. Then is when we started. We had the barrios who started to bring in the ideas of the possibility that the government was not going to last and that we—since we had representation from every barrio and had representatives from every social group—we were the ones responsible to make it known, to make a public manifestation as to what the Sandinistas were doing.

For some time, key members of SICC had been meeting with representatives of a variety of forces interested in destabilizing the revolutionary government. In 1986 Hernan Savery told me that he had met on a number of occasions with a North American who was promoting a drive to have the United Nations recognize the independence of the Atlantic Coast. According to Savery, a small group of adult male SICC members met on a number of occasions to discuss this option. Savery added that the North American had offered money for organizing and had discussed the possibility of mercenary troop support in exchange for rights to exploit Coast resources after independence. According to Savery (interview, 1986), he personally was skeptical about these plans, for they would mean "war with Nicaragua and the rest of Central America"; however, "the older men in SICC loved the idea."

By mid-1980 others of the older male members of SICC, including Savery, were also in conversation with representatives of political

parties in opposition to the Sandinistas and other Mestizos in Managua who were dissatisfied with the Revolution. Savery mentioned Bernardino Larios, Eden Pastora, and Roberto Pineda as people he personally met with to discuss their mutual discontent with the Sandinistas. Miss Jenelee remembers this crucial period with some bitterness (interview, 1995):

I didn't know that Savery was talking to someone outside . . . until afterwards when we had several of these gringos come down and one by one they were asking questions. By this time we didn't know. I personally did not know what the men were doing, but they were in something else. They began to use SICC at that moment as a front . . . All I knew was that the people were being supplanted. The people were losing their jobs to the Cubans and I was completely against that. . . . They all had their other interests but SICC was the only organized group. . . . Dickie Jackson, he was talking to some of the Somoza people that had left. And Gayland [Vance] was talking to the Conservatives. Fire Fire [Archibald] was talking to the Conservative people. And here I am with this cultural group. . . . Savery was talking to the . . . we call them Blue Eyes . . . So here I am. They are not talking to me, they are talking to these guys. So when we had the last meeting and they voted and they said the only way to let the people in Managua to know what is happening is to have a manifestation.

Although it is not clear exactly who was involved or the precise nature of the varied interests they were serving, a demonstration was planned by a small group of Creoles associated with SICC. Ostensibly, its focus was to demand the removal of the Cubans; however, almost all the Creoles I have spoken to who participated affirm that the Cuban issue was only a catalyst for the three days of disturbances that followed. More than two-thirds of Creoles interviewed in a 1984 CIDCA survey said that they did not believe that the Cubans were a threat.

In fact, there was a host of other demands. These included demands for more Creole representation in the government, the dismissal of the manager (a Pacific Coast Mestizo) from one of the fishing plants, free marketing of consumer goods, and so on. As we have seen, some of the SICC leaders who helped organize the demonstration favored the separation of the Atlantic Coast from the rest of Nicaragua. These persons evidently planned to use the demonstration toward this end. Indeed, in our survey a third of the Creoles interviewed said they supported these separatist plans at that time (Gordon 1987).

Black September

On September 28, 1980, the series of events now referred to as "Black September," or the "Manifestación," began with a demonstration in Beholden, the largest of Bluefields' Creole barrios. It quickly gathered momentum. Demonstrators marched through Bluefields' Creole neighborhoods, picking up participants as they went along. Emotions ran high as people vented their accumulated frustrations (Jenelee Hodgson interview, 1995): "When the group got so big and church was over, all of the young people from Baptist, we came out to the front of the church. Ahhhh! They say now, well, 'Miss Jenelee, this thing is so big!' They say, 'Come on!' So, well, they going to the park. So we went along to hear."

On the first day, the march ended in the town park, where all gathered to hear speeches denouncing the Cubans and the Sandinista government. The demonstration then took on a spontaneous quality lasting for three days. Businesses and government offices closed. Supporters arrived from most of the Creole settlements in South Zelaya. For three days the streets were filled with people. At one point the demonstrators marched to the *cuartel*, where they became a huge, jeering, stick-waving, stone-and bottle-throwing crowd. In the crowd were a few former members of the *cuartel* group armed with automatic weapons. The crowd threatened to enter and take control from the soldiers, who had been confined to quarters during the demonstrations. Shots were fired in the air and the crowd dispersed, but not before at least one person was injured by gunfire and several soldiers by hurled debris.

Crowds formed in front of government officials' houses. There they demanded that the officials come out and hear the crowd's complaints. When the officials appeared, the crowd shouted them down and threatened them. Creoles identified with the Revolution were beaten and threatened with death by the demonstrators. The protesters took over the government-controlled radio station and broadcast messages supporting the rebellion. They barricaded the streets in all the Creole barrios. The town's seafood-packing plant was broken into and a number of automatic weapons taken from the security guards' stock.

The third day the government called in the POI (Policía de Orden Interno—Internal Order Police) from Managua to restore order. The people of Bluefields were told that members of the Government Junta for National Reconstruction were coming to negotiate with them; they gathered at the municipal wharf on the lagoon to await them. Instead of the Junta, the POI arrived in helicopters at the airport in full battle dress. From the moment they arrived, they began firing their weapons in an effort to intimidate the people. They were immediately trucked to the

center of town, where they set up barricades and took battle positions. These troops dispersed the demonstrators at the wharf with gunfire and by roughing them up. They made arrests and a few people were injured, some by stray bullets.

Black September is one of the central events in contemporary Creole history. Leading Creole historian Hugo Sujo told me (interview, 1988) that he believed that, had the Creoles been able to obtain sufficient weapons, they would have used them on that occasion to "free" the Coast. He also said that another Creole leader had stated that he had never been so proud to be a Creole as he was on the day the Manifestación began.

During my time in Bluefields, many Creoles recounted for me their experiences over these three days. Their accounts were invariably detailed and fresh in the minds of the tellers, despite the fact that some, like the one by Percy González recounted below, were narrated more than a decade after the events. I include a long portion of Percy's account to give the reader a better feel for the events, their spontaneity, the heavy-handed Sandinista response, and the demonstration's lasting effects on the Creole community:

Yes, I was in that rush—for the manifestation. . . . Yes, well, I watching because that month was the San Jerónimo and a lot of people in the street. Everybody in the street. And the manifestation. I remember I come walk up here and the whole street did full up. But the day before, even some old people and things did marching going against the Cuban them. I wasn't in that. I watch it pass. But the days them passed and they have meeting in the Moravian, public meeting where this one accuse the next one. Plenty stiff pulling . . . During the manifestation I come around here—they did gone with Brother Gayland [Vance] jail. And the people them, "We want Brother Gayland. We want Brother Gayland." They down to did shoot one old man around there. Just they didn't kill him. The people them like breaking down the jail door and stoning rock. A little after that I see they bring out Brother Gayland. They lift him up and just people, people. . . .

So after that the following day, no, that night they did had a meeting in the Moravian with Lumberto. My brother did in there, too, John. People them get kind of aggressive. They nearly down to beat him up with a umbrella. The people them was upstir. They say, well, today in the Moravian again. And like them did send get the POI them from Managua.

That day we did standing up by Stanford Cash house, up in

Beholden front of the Baptist school. Was Alan, one guy name Earl, next one Alvin Downs, Rat did out there, too. Talking out there from one thing to the other. And we hear bullet fire down street. There they shoot off some women foot. And people running up, coming up from by the *depósito* come here. I tell them, "Boy, let's we make a move." And the people them coming. You know, and by we talking to one of Stanford son, he say, "Well, let we go in, right in the house till the people them pass." So his mother say, "No, no, no, none of that here! Not here!" She lock the door. But we still yet got time to move. Them boys them say we not doing anything. We going stay right here. I say things no look good and I went behind one house, by Stanford house, one little board house.

I standing up behind. And we hear when the captain come and get everybody spread down on the ground. Yes, got them with their hands kissing the ground . . . on the street man . . . on the pavement, kicking their foot open and telling them rough words. Ten, fifteen minutes pass, I only hear silence. I say, "Well, I going take a peep and see what." And as I peep to the door one was looking direct. "Hey you! . . . Come on here to the ground." They carry we down and make we get up. One of the guy did got on a military boots, one of my buddy. "Where you get this boots from?" roughing him up. And then tell we stand up and running so with we hand behind we reach by Ertell Brown house. The curve down. When we reaching by Chinese Club, a next guy what is *panguero* [boatman] here, he coming laughing and watching. But they no studying the women them. When I look, they ask him, "And you, where you going? Come on here in the line."

Man and boys. They carry we to Zelaya corner, gone move some big bricks and rocks and stump and tree. Because the people did have it block off. We move the thing them, no. One of them with one big-mouth gun so—just so the gun mouth big, his mouth big, too. Rain coming and we done move the thing them so we rushing by one barber shop . . . and he say "Get out here, you all SOB! You all not out butter [You will not melt from the rain]! You SOB! You all don't know what the Revolution means." And they start pick out you, you, you, you, you. No going. The balance could go. But by I's one of the shortest one in the crowd, I stay behind. And I coming by Burti Smith. That time I just begin growing my hair, got on a blue shade. One of them say, "Pay attention to this one here." And them boys start laugh. They say, "You salt boy [You have bad luck], Percy." But when it picking out time, now one of the guy want answer the fellow. I tell him, "Cool down, man. Them man

will hurt you right now. You know and he stay behind. The tall one them gone up ahead and I stay in the back. When he say "uno [you all] could go." . . . gone.

I didn't come out for nothing . . . Scraping up everybody. . . . No question, no question, you know. Them feel like you want—because them say we want separate here from back yonder. Them man come in with strict orders. They did carry Alan Managua, too. Same woman, too, Puna. They did carry Puna Managua. I hear they make she shove some of the cardboard [from placards] down her mouth and all them things. One priest they make help back [carry] one wooden beam here in town. That did up Beholden. . . . It did really look dread. From there is where the people start get—I feel like from there is where the people get more and more against what did going on then.

In the early morning of the following day, the troops entered the black barrios searching for the *cuartel* boys who had taken the weapons from the seafood plant and for the SICC leaders who had organized the demonstration. Some witnesses reported that the soldiers were initially met with sporadic automatic weapons fire. Searching and occasionally firing under houses, calling people from their beds, breaking down doors, the troops traumatized the neighborhoods as they arrested the presumed leaders of the disturbance. Creoles claim that the troops treated prisoners roughly, randomly threatened community members, and frequently used racial insults: "All the blacks who want to govern come out!"; "Black son of a whore!"; "Dance now, monkeys!"

Order was restored.

In the ensuing days, Comandante Jaime Wheelock of the National Directorate of the FSLN arrived to talk to the Creole community and to apologize for the POI's excesses. Government and FSLN representatives held meetings with community representatives to discuss possible solutions to the community's grievances.

The demonstration was a watershed in Creole opposition to the revolutionary government. It served to unify the Creole community in its criticisms of the Revolution. The community concluded from the handling of the incident that the FSLN was insensitive to its needs and desires and was its enemy.

The *Manifestación* also marked the suspension of overt Creole political activity. The arrest, detention, and subsequent exile of SICC's adult leadership smashed the only remaining Creole popular organization. From that point on, most Creoles were afraid to organize independent of

the FSLN's party structures. State Security and the Sandinista police did a good job of suppressing any attempts to do so.¹⁰

All that was left of pre-Triumph Creole political forces were the discredited black Sandinistas and the disorganized remnants of the old OPROCO Creole elite. The former were largely integrated into the lower echelons of the FSLN's local party structure;¹¹ the latter maintained a low profile but clustered in the Moravian High School and remained influential in the community. The elimination of SICC as an organization and the exile of its leadership as well as the black Sandinistas' forced abdication of racial cultural politics closed the space for effective racially and culturally based organization in Bluefields' Creole community. In general, over the next five years the Creole community bore its complaints, problems, and differences silently.

Creole Populism to Anglo Ideology

The Reaction

The importance of the Cuban question as a rallying point during Black September indicates that the latter was a turning point in another sense as well. By late 1980 the focus of the Creole criticism of the Revolution was changing. During the next five years, Creoles kept their counsel and grew increasingly alienated from the revolutionary process. The set of organizing ideas behind their politics changed from Creole populism—from what they saw as the Revolution's racism, ethnocentrism, and perpetuation of internal colonialism—to Anglo ideology, essentially a rejection of the Revolution's "communistic" (i.e., antireligion, anticapital, antidemocratic, anti-U.S.) character. Once this latter set of ideas became predominant in organizing ideas for Creole politics, all problems, both real and imagined, were ultimately reducible to it.

This transformation was influenced by Creole relations with other oppositional forces. The growing militancy of the Miskitu and other indigenous groups organized in MISURASATA played an important role in this regard. The potential for racial/cultural and/or regional alliance with the Miskitu, who by 1981 were also having serious problems with the Sandinistas, was negated by Creole feelings of superiority and Miskitu denial of Creole indigenous status. I was told by Creoles on a number of occasions that the Coast's Indian leaders had publicly stated that all Mestizos would have to leave the region when Indians took their rightful positions. Creoles, on the other hand, would be allowed to stay, but only under Indian authority. Creoles resented this mightily and also began to reflect on the possible threat of others' racial/cultural politics to their position. The Creole commonsense notion of relations between

Creoles and Miskitu and their respective politics during this period was summed up by Miss Azalee Hodgson, a Creole, as follows: "The Miskitu don't give a rip about niggers."¹²

The transformation in Creole politics was also influenced by alliances forged by influential sectors of the community. As we have seen, by late 1980, for a number of SICC leaders the Sandinistas had become the central representatives of Mestizo power and the Nicaraguan nation. Paradoxically, while at the forefront of the Creoles' racial/cultural social movement, they simultaneously sought support for their struggle against the revolutionary state from conservative Mestizos and U.S. whites. Alliance with these political forces could only be forged on anticommunist, anti-Sandinista grounds and not on racial or even cultural grounds. Anticommunism, therefore, became an important element of this militant Creole group's politics in ways that it had not been when many of these same leaders embraced the Trotskyite "race man," Kalalú.

Organic leadership for the emergence of this new politics was provided by Moravian High School teachers. The departure of those teachers who had been SICC leaders left a faculty that, because of its strong support of organized religion, was very anticommunist and, because of its historical affiliation with the U.S. missionaries, pro-U.S. These teachers, some of whom, as we have seen, were former members of OPROCO, were generally supporters of the culturalist perspective and had strong Anglo diasporic identities. This reinforced their identification with the United States and weakened their penchant for the race-based politics associated with Creole populism and black Caribbean diasporic identity.

Creole Politics in Times of Crisis

The political transformation of the Creole community, however, had much to do with the evolving political, economic, military, and social conjuncture and the everyday mobilization of elements of Creole political common sense by Creoles as they struggled to make sense of these conjunctures and developed politics to confront them. From late 1981 onward, I was a close observer and participant in this process.

The period between 1982 and 1985 was one of great turmoil of all kinds in Bluefields. The Creole community entered this era in a funk, its high expectations for the recovery of its once-preeminent local position dashed and apprehensive about the future. At the end of this era, just before the easing of military tensions and the beginning of the implementation of partial political autonomy for the Atlantic Coast, the community had sunk into a state of despair and disgust with the "communitistic" Revolution. The Creole economy had collapsed. The

community's cultural continuity and influence in the region had plunged into a downward spiral from which it will, perhaps, never recover.

Warfare raged during much of the era, with Creoles participating as combatants on the opposing sides but mostly as civilians caught between them. My family and I lived through these times.

My direct introduction to terror and the awesome responsibility for the effects of my own intellectual practice came in 1983, when I was working with fishing cooperatives in the Creole and Miskitu communities north of Bluefields. We had successfully helped a group of fishermen in Tasbapaunie get organized and distributed some fishing gear to them. I had worked particularly closely with Thomas Hunter, a Creole fisherman and father of five, who was vice-president of the cooperative. This particular day, while he and others were out fishing shrimp, a group of Contras composed of both Miskitu and Creoles had entered Tasbapaunie. Word was sent to the fishing grounds of their arrival.

Most of the other fishermen decided not to go back to the village that evening. Thomas, claiming that he had done nothing wrong and therefore had nothing to fear, came home to his family. The Contra group captured him and took him across the Lagoon to Gun Point. There they tied him to a coconut palm. After four days of intermittent torture, they cut off his ears and penis and stuffed them in his mouth. Then they killed him.

Placing Thomas Hunter's ears in his mouth was a symbolic message that even a child could read. He died accused of being an informant for the Sandinistas. This accusation was undoubtedly based on his work with me and others identified with the revolutionary state in the establishment of the cooperative.

In my memory, war and violence were the defining reality of this era. They pervade the meager field notes I began taking toward its end, as can be seen from the following textual extracts:

Miss Alva's boy just died. He was hurt in action about a month ago. He was carried back to base camp and died in his hammock. The cook for the group saw him buried. She [Miss Alva] went to Tasba, but came back because she was afraid someone would denounce her there. 8/29/85

Sylvia Fox's brother and sister were killed in an attack on their panga [speedboat] yesterday while on their way to Pearl Lagoon. One other from Lagoon was injured. . . . The Haulover people told me that the Contra were sorry for the incident. It was raining and everyone was huddled under military raincoats. The Contra thought the Foxes were military and attacked. 9/23/85

Two weeks ago on a trip to Sandy Bay a boat carrying medicine, fishing materials, food, a light plant, cement, and other goods from

the government to the community was held up by the "bush boys" just north of Tasbapaunie on the inside. Alfonso Smith, the new head of MISURASATA in the zone (Makantaka), gave orders to let traffic go through, but the boat was attacked anyway. Fishing materials, three-fourths of the medicine, and food were taken by the boys, many of whom were from Bluefields and Tasba. Half Creole and other half Miskitu. Now everyone is afraid to travel through the canal. 9/23/85

The "Express" was fired upon at Kisuta, just outside of Tasba, by the Contras on Sun. 13th Oct. The Contras in the area are said to be new people and wearing masks. 10/21/85

Fighting up by Le Fe. One Orinoco man was killed. An attack on Pearl Lagoon was repulsed. 10/28/85

A member of the EPS [Ejército Popular Sandinista—Popular Sandinista Army] came home drunk and blew off his foot while trying to shoot his mother last night at 1:30 AM in the Seminario behind our house. From our beds we listened to his shouts of anger and later his screams of agony for what seemed like an hour. 1/24/86

Over the years the tension and terror became almost normal; their impact was, however, revealed in our dreams:

Wyatt [my son] is sick with fever. I'm hoping it is just a cold. I had two dreams that I remember last night. One had to do with a renegade boat that later turned out to be Contra. It came into the harbor at full speed, belching black smoke. It was wooden in dilapidated condition with half-gone white paint job. It rammed several boats and they rammed a panga with an old man standing in it. It crumpled the panga and the man was left standing to the side of the boat, half hanging on. Then it went back for another shot and wrecked up some other boats. I was watching from on the top of a grassy hill with some houses on it near the water. As I was going away from the hill I saw two Hind helicopters hovering over the boat and people were cheering. I came down to CIDCA. There was a middle-aged man riding a motorcycle. Then things got serious. The people in the militia house were getting armed up. I saw a bunch of them to what was [near] a wide door ready to fight, one was naked. At the last instant, Orlando with a gun scrambled to be with them. I think some shooting started. I woke up.

In the next dream I was in a classroom or meeting when Dwight Narciso came up to me to tell me in confidence that Daisy [my

wife] had been wounded in an attack on the "Express" and had been taken by the Contras to some hospital in the Chontales bush. She had a gaping slash in the front part of her body from chest to abdomen.

I woke up. I didn't get much sleep tending to Wyatt. I am scared, feel sick, and am tired. 11/7/86

What follows must be read with a soundtrack of AK-47 bursts, rocket launchers, helicopter engines, and army boots in the mud, the rancid cooking-oil and old-sweat smell of tropical armies, and a constant, throbbing undercurrent of absence, deprivation, tension, fear, and nostalgia for simpler, less-dangerous times. Such was the backdrop of Creole lives and politics during the early 1980's.

When I first started traveling regularly to Bluefields in late 1981, there was a fairly high level of discontent with the revolutionary process in the Creole community; however, although many people told me that Bluefields had changed for the worse in the two years since the Triumph, it was hard to see how. I had arrived during what turned out to be a two-year lull between the unstable period of insurrection and consolidation of revolutionary state power and the outbreak of war in the region. At that time, despite the extreme bitterness over the political dynamics of the recent past, there was an atmosphere of normalcy to the place. The patterns of daily life seemed well established and regularized. The level of discontent seemed no higher than in subaltern communities I was familiar with in the United States: there was no overwhelming joy, but neither was there insufferable pain or sorrow. Events, though, were already under way that would substantially undercut this normalcy and usher in an era of almost continual crisis and transform Creole politics.

By mid-1980 small groups of Creoles and Miskitu from communities north of Bluefields had taken up arms against the Revolution. Many were armed by the Sandinistas in the early days after the Triumph as the latter had taken control of the Coast. The activities of these young men had no perceptible impact on Bluefields in 1981. I remember being impressed by how few military personnel and equipment were visible in Bluefields compared with what I had experienced in the rest of the country.

Nevertheless, the growing threat of "counterrevolutionary" activity prompted the formation of militia battalions from Bluefields' population. The first was mobilized in 1980 and included a fairly large number of Creoles. Initially, the realities of war were brought to Bluefields' Creole community through the experiences of these young men.

By 1983 large portions of Bluefields' hinterland were a battlefield, and the Creole community experienced the warfare directly when people traveled anywhere outside of town. Boats were regularly fired on and

hijacked, and transportation throughout the region was disrupted. Outlying communities unsympathetic to the counterrevolutionary forces were attacked. People were kidnapped and forced to join the opposition forces; many more joined of their own accord. Fishing boats were robbed, hijacked, and sabotaged. The Sandinista army fought skirmishes with opposing forces throughout the region. In a 1985 predawn raid, Bluefields itself was attacked. By afternoon the battle was over. Twenty-two bodies of dead Contras, including sons of Bluefields residents, were dumped in the town park for public display. The so-called low-intensity war affected every aspect of Creole life.

Many Creoles, accepting the Reagan administration's position that the Sandinistas were waging an unnecessary war as agents of the Cubans and Soviets, blamed the Revolution for the warfare. After another of the seemingly continuous attacks on an outlying Creole community by opposition forces, I had a conversation with the Whitikers. It was similar in many ways to others I had with Creoles during this period. The Whitikers were convinced the warfare was mostly the Sandinistas' fault, even though opposition forces had attacked Creole civilians and communities and the whole region was suffering from their terrorism. They repeated the Reagan administration line that they had heard on the Voice of America and in the streets of Bluefields: the Sandinistas were sending arms to the illegitimate revolutionaries in El Salvador and therefore irresponsibly provoking the United States. The Whitikers' position was that the Sandinistas should stop sending arms so that the war would end. What the Whitikers hoped the government would do was to become less "communist" and stop fighting as the way to make "Reagan stop the war." The intricacies of how this was to be done and still maintain a Revolution were not of much concern to them. Perhaps this was the whole point: for the Whitikers and many other Creoles in the mid-1980's, it was the Sandinistas, not the United States, who were fomenting the senseless conflict.

To this situation of seemingly endless uncertainty and tension was added material deprivation. Few problems generated more Creole animosity toward the Revolution in the post-Manifestación era than the growing economic crisis. After the Triumph, most of the major merchants of Bluefields left, reducing the availability of consumer goods. Imported consumer goods all but disappeared as a consequence of the U.S. economic blockade and Nicaraguan government policy designed to terminate economic dependence. It became hard for Creoles to find many of their "decencies," especially goods imported from the United States. Creoles were not comfortable with the government rationing of basic consumer items initiated to assure their availability to all Nicara-

guans; they were accustomed to buying as much as they wanted (or could afford) whenever they desired.

Economic conditions on the Atlantic Coast grew steadily worse after early 1982 as a result of the grave national military situation. As warfare and terrorism engulfed the countryside, agricultural production on the Coast plummeted, causing shortages of some traditional foodstuffs. War-related inflation ate away at Creole buying power.

To add to these problems, production in the fishing industry flagged. Fleet size shrank dramatically because of owner flight and boat hijackings. The efficiency of the packing plants diminished, undermined by antiquated machinery, lack of spare parts, and shortages of technically qualified personnel. Two of the five fishing companies in the area had to be closed, eliminating close to a thousand jobs.

Under the strain of the general crisis, basic services in Bluefields deteriorated. Repair parts and, at times, fuel for the generators at the municipal power plant were difficult to obtain. Most nights, sections of Bluefields were without light for four or five hours. The already-limited phone system connecting Bluefields to the Pacific was often inoperable. In general, transportation and communications connecting Bluefields with the rest of the nation and the Coast were often disrupted and, in general, uncertain.

Creoles became obsessed with the economic crisis. For years it was nearly the only topic of conversation on the street and in homes. The irregular supply and outright scarcity of basic consumer items was particularly destabilizing. People spent inordinate amounts of time searching for goods that previously had been readily available. At various times, there was no hand soap, no toilet paper, no white sugar, no sanitary pads, no meat, no light bulbs, no bottled gas, no clothing, and on and on. For a while we and our neighbors had to take the light bulbs on our front porches in at night because, since you could not buy light bulbs, people were stealing and reselling them. The loudest complaints were heard on the occasions when there was no beer in town.

Hyperinflation had set in by the mid-1980's and profoundly undermined the Creole standard of living. You had to either spend your monthly pay check in the first days after receiving it, change it for dollars on the black market, or risk having it be practically worthless by the end of the month. At one point, we had one-million-córdoba bills in which the new number designations were merely stamped over the original number on one-thousand-córdoba bills.

In CIDCA's 1984 survey, almost two-thirds of those Creoles interviewed pointed to economic problems as the basis of their disillusionment with the Revolution (Gordon 1987). "For Creoles the economic

crisis was an ethnic crisis as well."¹³ They were losing their status as an economic elite. The types of jobs that defined their identity were disappearing. The imported components of their material culture were not available. They yearned for Kraft American cheese and Tang and Levi's, but these were not to be found. In response, many Creoles left the country. Their group identity and cohesiveness were therefore threatened, along with their economic power.

Creoles accepted, to a point, the Sandinista claim that the war was a major cause of the crisis. As we have seen, however, they blamed the Revolution for that warfare. From the perspective of Anglo ideology, most believed that the ills of the economy stemmed from a combination of the Sandinistas' unjust war and the economic irrationality of the communistic system that the revolutionary government had instituted. They pointed especially to government control of prices, the distribution of basic products, external trade, the movement of foreign exchange, and the confiscation of private property as basic problems and proof of this ideological tendency.

Post-Manifestación problems between the Creole community and the revolutionary government over the role of the Creole church were now seen not so much as indications of Mestizo ethnocentrism as of more proof of Sandinista communism. By 1982 it was evident that the Sandinistas were running into problems with non-Creole sectors of the religious community. In the northern portions of the Atlantic Coast, as the situation between the revolutionary government and the Miskitu disintegrated, local Miskitu leaders of the Moravian Church took prominent roles in antigovernment activities, including military actions. This further soured the relationship between that church and the Sandinistas.

Later attempts at reconciliation eased tensions between the Moravian Church hierarchy and the revolutionary government; however, toward the end of the period in question, many of those in church leadership positions who had been conciliatory toward the government were marginalized. In 1985 the national synod voted into power leaders who were relatively sympathetic to the Miskitu resistance and hostile to the Sandinistas.

The intensifying problems with the Moravian Church occurred simultaneously with increasing problems on a national level between the Sandinistas and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. These tensions grew to the point that the Sandinistas considered the Catholic Church hierarchy to be the internal front of the counterrevolution. This hierarchy, based in the Pacific, withdrew key Catholic clergy sympathetic to the Revolution from their positions on the Atlantic Coast. As a result, the Catholic Church on the Coast became much less enthusiastic about the revolutionary process.

These events coincided with the advent of U.S. propaganda that pictured the Sandinistas as communists and therefore antireligion. Creoles began to see the problems of their churches as stemming not so much from ethnic conflicts as from the antireligious communism of the Sandinistas.

Once Creoles judged the Revolution to be communistic, a host of other "proofs" of this judgment were not hard to come by. The Sandinistas' strong stand against imperialism, the strongest force tying together the FSLN's post-Triumph alliance, was unpopular among Creoles and, for them, yet another indication of its communist leanings. The United States and North Americans, following Anglo ideology and Anglo diasporic identity, were viewed in a sympathetic light by Creoles. In one of many conversations I had with James Fenton in 1988 on the subject, he told me that the Sandinistas were wrong to go against the United States. It was the United States that had put the FSLN in power and then the ungrateful FSLN hadn't wanted to have anything to do with it. He went on to say that no nation could get along without the help of the United States, the most powerful country in the World: "The U.S. is the mother of the world." In his view, Nicaragua could not get ahead without U.S. help and sooner or later would have to go to the United States for aid. Instead of fighting the United States, the Sandinistas should be getting help from it. One of his most fervent hopes was that the FSLN would be taken out of power and normal relations reestablished with the United States.

The Sandinista embrace of the Soviet Union and Cuba and rejection of the United States in 1988 was seen by Creoles as another clear indication of Sandinista communism and rubbed against the grain of Creole common sense. The strength of Creoles' association of the FSLN with nations of the "Communist bloc" is brought out by the following anecdote.

In 1982, when groups of North American tourist supporters of the Revolution first began arriving in Bluefields, much of the Creole community was convinced that they were Soviets. After all, they had been convinced by propaganda that North Americans were against the Revolution and would not come to Nicaragua. They also had heard and believed that there was a large Soviet presence in Nicaragua, though they had never seen anyone. To Creoles, then, these white people, as supporters of the Revolution, must be Soviets.

In 1983 and again in 1984, the Sandinistas accused some leaders of the Creole community of trying to revive SICC and plotting with the counterrevolution. They were picked up and jailed for varying periods of time. In the outlying Creole communities, security forces arrested villagers for collaboration with the Contras. In 1985 the Sandinista

government declared a nationwide state of emergency, which led to the closing of the national opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*. These events and the anti-Sandinista propaganda that accompanied them verified in the Creole mind the accusations of Sandinista totalitarianism.

By 1984 the accumulation of events and experiences over five years of revolution had crystallized in many Creole minds into a negative association of the Revolution and communism. Alan Stephenson's statement of this thinking is perhaps more eloquent than the average but in many ways typical of the Creole laments I heard during these times (interview, 1991):

What really hurt me was when they start arresting people—midnight—innocent people locking them up. . . . around that time or a little after [the *Manifestación*] when they start picking up people that used to work for Somoza and was in partnership with Somoza just lock them up in jail. . . . there was Fred Copeland, Amos Hodgson, . . . They didn't take everybody one day . . . Anyway, there was dozens of people . . . had them locked up in the *Variadades* Theater. Some of the people were sent to Managua, like Charles Notice and Fire Fire.

. . . When they start picking people up, taking away their business, confiscating their property . . . having people spy on you, reporting lies—that's when I really started thinking differently about them. . . . That was the reason why we couldn't have any meeting in the home, any private meeting, and they even had some of the neighbors watching me. . . . You couldn't go out in the night on a boat and you still have that law. If you want to go to the Bluff you have to get out a *zarpe* [travel authorization]. . . . right here in town they went too far to suit me . . . They were exploiting the fishermen. When the devaluation start to go crazy, they didn't change the price of the lobster to correspond with the dollar price we were making. So I started out in 1980 at U.S.\$4.20 a pound and around the middle 1980's that C\$42 was worth U.S.\$0.42 . . . So we just couldn't survive. I figure, well, they meant to crush all private enterprise and that was one of the way to do it. . . . That was when I change my mind about Sandino.

. . . they turn radical communists. They call it socialist, but they took away everybody business and then they had these *expendios* [expenditures]. If you want to buy a pound of rice, you had to get in a line, and when they get to you they say they don't have any more. Things like that. And spying and—I don't know, the control in general over the people. Nobody could do anything unless you were Sandino. . . . So I see where you would not survive with them unless you joined up with them.

The gravest blow to Creole/Sandinista relations was the recruitment of Creole youth into the *Servicio Militar Patriótico* (SMP—Patriotic Military Service). The revolutionary government implemented compulsory military service in 1983 in response to the worsening national crisis. Recruitment was not begun in Bluefields until 1984. Creoles, who did not favor the Revolution to begin with, were particularly incensed that their sons would have to serve in the army. This was viewed as the ultimate invasion of individual rights and further proof of the nefarious and communistic nature of the government. The initial community response was to hide their young men in their houses or to send them to outlying communities.

At first, most recruits were in fact volunteers. After a while, young men of draft age were picked up at school, off the streets, in the movie theaters, at parties, and the like. A decision was made not to invade homes in search of draft evaders, but young men in public spaces were fair game.

In 1984 a group of mostly Mestizo students organized a protest movement against the SMP in Bluefields in which some Creole students participated. Demonstrations organized in the streets were confronted by "*turbas*" (FSLN cadres) mobilized against them instead of by the police or military, and stick, stone, and fist fighting broke out.¹⁴ The movement was crushed in this manner (Tito Marino interview notes, 1989). Subsequently, wave after wave of Creole youth left the country. Most walked to Costa Rica; many ended up in the refugee camps there; many others, however, were recruited into the counterrevolutionary military groups that operated in the southern Atlantic Coast and were headquartered in the neighboring country. Not only did the SMP provide further evidence to the Creole community of the FSLN's communist totalitarianism, but, by facilitating the recruitment of Creole youth into the forces of the counterrevolution, it provided a positive basis of identification for them and their families with forces whose principal criticism was the leftist positioning of the government.

Taking Stock

The shift, then, from a criticism of the Revolution based on issues of ethnopolitical power to one based on the Revolution's supposed communistic nature was the result of a number of interrelated factors. The Sandinistas made the ethnopolitical struggle untenable for Creoles. They smashed Creole social movements forged first by the black Sandinistas and then by SICC and forced many of the important Creole leaders of these movements to join them unconditionally or to leave the Atlantic Coast. The Creole community was demoralized and intimidated. After the *Manifestación*, Creoles realized that the revolutionary

state was willing to use coercive power, to which they had no response, to maintain order and, by default, the racial/cultural status quo. Creoles realized that their struggle for racial/cultural rights was an isolated one and that they could expect little support on this issue from other of the growing oppositional forces (Miskitu, Mestizo, or U.S. white) inside or outside the country. As a consequence, Creoles deemphasized demands and criticism based on Creole populism.

For Creoles, the initial legitimacy of the Sandinista government was based on the latter's promise of popular representation; however, Creoles blamed the defeat of their ethnopolitical project on the Sandinistas and believed that they had betrayed the terms of their own revolution. Creoles did not feel empowered or in control of their destinies under the government dominated by the FSLN. This meant that from the perspective of Creole populism the Sandinistas did not and could not represent their interests. During the year and a half immediately following the Triumph, the revolutionary government lost its legitimacy in Creole eyes.

Correspondingly, the FSLN and, in particular, the black Sandinistas lost their potential as the political leadership of the Creole community. After the undermining of the black Sandinista project and the FSLN's initial loss of legitimacy, the Sandinista political project was increasingly rejected by Creoles. There was no other agency or group within or outside the Creole community with politics and strong enough influence to shape the development of a counterhegemonic organization of Creole political common sense that could offset Anglo ideology, the heritage of an oppressive and exploitative colonial past.

Had the Sandinistas been able to establish their legitimacy with the Creole community through a combination of Creole empowerment and the creation of a vision of a better future for Creoles in collaboration with the Revolution, they might have been able to cement a political alliance with them, as they had done with other segments of Nicaraguan society. More important, on this basis, it would have been possible to assist Creoles in the creation of a distinctively Creole liberating counterhegemony that, in theory, could have facilitated coordinated FSLN and Creole opposition to imperialism and other forms of oppression. The dissonances between Creole populism and Anglo ideology offered a basis for the organization of such a counterhegemony based on Creole populism. This agenda would have been all the more possible during the first years after the Triumph, when opposing ideological forces such as those of U.S. capitalism and the Central American bourgeoisie, were inactive and confused in their response to the Revolution. The social movement that began to coalesce around the black Sandinistas in the months after the Triumph seemed to contain the grounds for such an opportunity; however, it was not to be.¹⁵

SICC, whose leaders' racial/cultural stand focused almost exclusively on the racist internal colonialism of the Mestizo-dominated state and not on racial imperialism, compromised their racial/cultural politics to form anti-Sandinista alliances with Mestizos and U.S. whites. When this move was smashed, Creoles, disillusioned by their inability to make headway on the racial/cultural front and already nudged in this direction by sectors of the SICCC leadership, downplayed their "utopian project" based on populism. Lacking any alternative organization of commonsense criteria and never fully convinced by the new political ideas of the Revolution, Creoles roused hegemonic Anglo ideology as a basis for judging the Revolution. In this politics they were led by important elements of the remaining group of Creole leaders and intellectuals who were clustered around the Moravian High School.

The resultant Creole criticisms both dovetailed with and were educed by those of the Reagan administration and the Nicaraguan bourgeois opposition who depicted the revolutionary government as Marxist-Leninist or communist. By 1981 increasingly virulent anti-Sandinista propaganda was being disseminated throughout the Atlantic Coast by the North American media, the U.S. government (through the Voice of America and two CIA-supported radio stations), and other important U.S. clients, especially the bourgeois media in Costa Rica (television and radio), Honduras (radio), and Nicaragua (newspaper and radio).

Creoles, well versed in cold war ideology, understood that this meant that the Sandinistas stood accused of being totalitarian, antireligion, war mongering, economically irrational, and the like. The characterization of the Revolution in these terms evoked an almost Pavlovian response in the Creole community based on the hegemonic role of Anglo ideology. Henceforth any practical problems that the Creole community experienced within the Revolution were understood to be the consequence of Sandinista communism. Even the denial of ethnic rights, while still important for most Creoles, could now be seen as just another aspect of a totalitarian state's denial of popular democracy.

Anglo diasporic identity played an important role in this regard. The anti-U.S. posture of the Revolution was read by Creoles as anti-Anglo and therefore anti-Creole. Additionally, Anglo diasporic identity facilitated the expression of commonsense elements of Anglo ideology as natural components of a Creole politics.

Creole populism never totally faded away as a basis for understanding the Revolution. There were members of the community for whom the racial/cultural question remained the most important basis for criticism. In part this was based on the continued salience of black Caribbean identity. The rasta boys and those associated with them and the huge popularity of reggae music among Creoles were the outstanding examples of this tendency. Their politics was closely related to trans-

Caribbean currents of black nationalism and racial transgression as the Soul Vibes lyrics in the epigraph in the preface indicate. For the majority of Creoles, however, Creole populism became secondary to Anglo ideology as the salient position from which to evaluate the Sandinista project.

By 1985 Anglo ideology had so far overshadowed Creole populism that some Creoles were denying the validity of the previously all-important racial/cultural struggle. By this time, the national government, admitting that it had made a number of mistakes in its handling of the Atlantic Coast and its racial/cultural minorities, instituted a process that led to the eventual establishment of regionally autonomous governments for the area. In a propaganda pamphlet prepared by the Creole counterrevolution based in Costa Rica for distribution by their guerrilla bands in Nicaragua's Creole communities (extracted in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter), however, the communism of the Sandinistas and its threat to religion and so on was decried at the same time that racial/cultural demands for separation of the Atlantic Coast and "autonomy" were explicitly rejected.

The authors of the pamphlet were Creole leaders who had left Nicaragua after the *Manifestación*. The ideas found in their pamphlet represent the most commonly articulated Creole political positions at the end of the period under analysis. Comparison of this tract with one authored just prior to the Revolution by a leader of OPROCO, whose anti-internal colonialism represented the most consistently enunciated Creole political position of that time, indicates the shift in emphasis and articulation of Creole political common sense (Tobie 1976):

Our gradual relegation or displacement is nothing new, it is but a trend that has been taking place over the past 3/4 of a century. This policy of acculturation, which culminated in the closure of our schools during the Zelaya era, continued with the assignment of practically all government posts, from messengers upward, to emigrants from the Interior. The dire effects in the psyche of the Coast people is evident up to this day. The consequences were not only your confinement to a lower economic strata, and emigration looking for a better life due to the restriction to our sources of income; but, as a natural outcome, the instilling of a sense of purposelessness in all our endeavors.

What say do we have in our own affairs? . . . we should be masters in our own house; . . . we should be the determining factor in our own destiny!

8.

Conclusion

This book is a narrative of a vibrant and complex people; thus it cannot be simply summarized, and it certainly cannot end. Nevertheless, every book needs a conclusion and I have reached that point in this one. My intimate relationship with Creole everyday politics has ended and my place in the Bluefields community has changed over the decade this book has gestated. Since in important ways the book is as much about my relationship with the community and its politics as it is about the community itself, I will conclude with the changes in that relationship and how they affect the book's status.

I was awakened by a phone call from my mother, a dyed-in-the-wool Frente supporter, at around 5 AM on a January day in 1990. It was still dark in Austin, and cold. She told me that the Sandinistas had lost the national elections held the previous day in Nicaragua. This was unimaginable. When I finally got in touch with Daisy in Bluefields hours later, she described the disbelief of the population. Even though they and their friends and families had not voted for the FSLN, Bluefields' Creole community expected almost everyone else in Nicaragua to vote for the Frente and for Daniel Ortega.

No one in Bluefields expected the outcome, but none were more shocked than the Sandinistas themselves. They seemed not even to have entertained the possibility of losing. Months before the election I remember being startled by the self-assured conviction with which a Creole Frente member told me that they would win "sin lugar a duda" (without a doubt). They had spent plenty to get elected. Frente hats, t-shirts, belts, key chains were all over the place on the Atlantic Coast. There had been last-minute pork barrel projects like an extravagant push in providing infrastructure for the small-scale fishing activities so important to smaller Creole and Miskitu communities of the region. The Frente had even brought in reggae icon Jimmy Cliff for a special campaign performance in Bluefields. (Jimmy evidently thought the

Creole crowd was the deadest group of black folks he had ever seen. Inexperienced in the protocol for such spectacles, they had stood gaping rather than joining in.)

Well, they *had* lost and nobody in Bluefields was ready for it. There was no public celebration. No one in the streets. Everyone seemed to be waiting to see what would happen next. Seven years later it is still not clear "what happens next"; everyone seems still to be waiting.

The elections of 1990 changed many things for my family and me. At the time I was starting my second semester teaching in the Anthropology Department at the University of Texas at Austin. Affirmative action was still an acceptable notion in some circles and, as a valuable racial commodity, I had worked out a two-year deal with UT under which I taught one semester a school year and spent the rest of my time in Nicaragua. In the previous three or four years, things had gotten kind of rough for me on the Atlantic Coast. Due to the suspicions of State Security and other complications, I was no longer able to play the kind of role in local affairs I had gotten accustomed to. With the UT deal I could maintain my commitments and connections in Bluefields and still explore different intellectual relationships, earn enough money to maintain my family in middle-class style, and travel a bit.

But spring 1990 was my last year with the part-time deal and we had to decide whether I would begin teaching full time at UT or go back home to Nicaragua. The elections forced our hand. It was clear that things were going to change, that the revolutionary experiment was going to end. What would be the consequences for our kind of politics? for our friends? for our projects? for CIDCA? We had two children. It was not a time for further experimentation. We went for the sure thing and moved to Austin, Texas. That's right—Texas. Who would have believed it—from Harlem to Philly to the Bay Area to revolutionary Nicaragua to . . . *Texas*.

A tenure-track job is a great thing to have. It is also a curse before you get tenure. The carrots of lifetime employment, family security, and prestige are held out before you, but the path is blocked by a number of formidable hurdles. One of the largest is the book that must be produced. In our department it is almost a direct trade-off—a book published by a "prestigious" press in exchange for tenure. Immediately, it was made clear to me that regardless of whatever else I did, I *had* to produce one.

This did not seem like too much of a problem. In Bluefields I had been a participant and observer for an extended period and had accumulated all sorts of knowledge that surely could be translated into a scholarly product that could be traded for tenure. For years I had been doing intellectual work: research, writing and thinking about Creoles, work for the Creole community to be used by a particular sector of that community in its struggle on the community's behalf. The book would

be the same thing, expanding on the core of work already produced with these objectives.

So little by little I began transferring almost ten years of accumulated information detritus—books, pamphlets, tapes, notebooks, papers—to Austin. Finding that even with all the junk I had accumulated I had very little of the kind of data anthropologists usually emerge with from the field, I spent the summer of 1991 in Bluefields interviewing a bunch of folks about Creole history and the like and toted the tapes back to my office in Texas. I also hit the archives and libraries in the United States with vigor. The interlibrary loan folks and I got close.

There were problems with this formulation, however. In this new phase, Bluefields and its Creole community remained the object of my intellectual curiosity and production but I was no longer there, no longer directly involved in the day-to-day life and politics of the community. More important, given my distance, my loss of contact with my Creole reference group, and the changes that had taken place in the political scene in Nicaragua, it was no longer clear that my intellectual work had any direct relationship to what was going on there. My years of work in Bluefields and the book project itself had been transformed from "home-work" to fieldwork.

What was this book for? Tenure. Who was this book speaking to? A limited number of elite North American scholars. Who were the Creoles whose perspective my work shared? Was I now speaking on my authority as an expert alone? It was a contradictory and paralyzing circumstance. I began working on other projects.

The early 1990's was the era of the "crisis of the black male." I am one, I practice a version of our culture, and I am part of a number of communities of black women and men. There was analytical work to be done. I had something to say that could contribute to an important politics around gender and race in black communities. I got involved with a group working on issues of African American men under the auspices of the Children's Defense Fund; I worked with black students on campus; I tried to organize a black fathers' group at my children's elementary school; I lectured groups in the community; and I marched to Washington to "atone" with the rest of us. I began teaching courses about the politics of race, culture, and gender and even published some articles about black men. I tried to re-create the model of activist scholarship developed at CIDCA during the 1980's and now in large part lost to me.

The Creole work got pushed to the background and the tenure clock ticked. I began to get prodded from a number of quarters: my father and mother, my wife, my close friend and mentor James in the department, Charles, other colleagues, even black students. "How did tenure look? What about the book?" So I went back to it. But what had started out as

a political project as I describe it in chapter 1 was now a commodity to be traded in for career advancement. The ultimate irony for me was that for a number of years I was too busy writing a book about Bluefields to visit Bluefields.

My increasing inability to see the relevance of my Creole work was a serious impediment. Partial salvation came from the Atlantic Coast. In the early 1990's two new universities opened in Bluefields. This was an exciting new development. Professor Sujo was teaching history at one of them and at the Moravian High School. He had told me how for the first time Coast history was being taught in Nicaragua—and about students' enthusiastic reception of it. During my few visits back, I had seen the numbers of mostly Creole students who daily crowded into CIDCA's tiny library seeking documentary information on a host of issues having to do with the Coast. Among the increasing numbers of Creoles concerned with these matters there was concern about the general lack of written materials available and the absence of Creole history in particular. I built these observations into a motivation for completing the book. It would focus on Creole ethnohistory and therefore respond to Creole desires and political needs for an authenticating history of the community.

I sent drafts of the history chapters to Professor Sujo, who used information from them in his classes. This and the omnipresent threat of failure, of not being a successful academic or responsible (read *employed*) husband and parent are what enabled—no—forced me to complete the manuscript and submit it for review.

The reviews came back generally favorable but agreeing that the manuscript had to be cut. After being afraid that I would have too little to say to write a book, I had produced a monstrosity of over five hundred pages. A book of this length is no longer feasible, given the current economics of academic publishing, so something had to be cut. The reviewers suggested, for a number of reasons, that it be the Creole history. So the history it was. Sitting in the hard drive of my computer and in messy piles on my office floor are pages and pages of Creole history that I thought Creoles wanted and should have access to.

So what is left of this grand political project that I regaled you, the reader, with in my introduction? Where is the homework and local group of affiliation that resolve my "crisis of authority"? In what ways is this work of use to the subjects of my investigation? What is the work's politics?

Since completing a draft of this book almost two years ago, I have been able to reconnect with Nicaragua. Former colleagues at CIDCA and I

have initiated a new "activist" research project in which we are participating with the indigenous and Creole communities of the Atlantic Coast in the "ethnomapping" of their communal lands. This is to be the first stage in a process of legalizing their historical and deeply contested claims to these lands.

In connection with the project I have made a number of visits and spent two months during the summer of 1997 in my house in Bluefields. As one might expect, Bluefields has continued to change since I wrote the introduction to this book. It has gotten bigger and poorer. There are few jobs. Unemployment officially hovers around 80 percent, though this seems impossible. There are more consumer items than I remember as retail enterprises continue their rebound from almost total elimination during the 1980's. People, especially Creoles, are spending money, although it comes mainly from remittances. Bluefields continues to become more and more Mestizo as Mestizos continue to enter from the interior and Creoles continue to move to the "States." Creoles could not possibly account for more than 30 percent of the population and are probably closer to 20 percent.

Capital from the Pacific is moving into the area as well. With only one major exception, the fishing companies that are not owned by shady U.S. capital are owned by equally shady business cartels from the Pacific. There is a land rush going on in the southern Coast, with both campesinos and Pacific elites staking out claims to huge tracts of land for subsistence, on the one hand, and speculation, on the other. The Regional Autonomous Governments institutionalized in the Sandinistas' final years to grant Costeños a measure of power over their own lives are under attack from the new national government after years of not-so-benign neglect from the previous one. The Autonomous Governments themselves have become the field for political wrangling by the local representatives of national parties and are largely dysfunctional.

In these circumstances, many Creoles feel deeply threatened. They feel that the pace at which they have been losing control of what they see as their lands, resources, and lives has been accelerating. Many feel that they are disappearing as a people, that the influence of their culture on the region is rapidly decreasing and that their culture itself is threatened. Most are deeply disillusioned by the autonomy process; many are ready to give up on it totally.

Nevertheless, there are important sectors of the Creole community committed to continuing their struggle for what they believe are their rights and for their vision of a more just future. Some of these Creoles are persons I worked with and struggled alongside when I lived in Bluefields; however, many of these persons are younger professionals who were

high school or university students in my day. They are Creoles who took advantage of the educational opportunities made available by the Revolution and who returned to Bluefields to make lives for themselves and contribute to their community. For a number of reasons, many of these "organic" intellectuals are women. Many are also the children of mixed marriages between Mestizos and Creoles. Some of them are able to speak only a little Creole, but most identify strongly as both Creole and black. Much to my delight, I found that many of the ideas and much of the information in this book speaks strongly to this group of people.

There is a demand for Creole history. I was asked on numerous occasions when the book (which Creoles understood would be a history—what else could it be about?) would be out and whether copies would be available on the Atlantic Coast. With Creoles increasingly dispersed and Creoleness seemingly slipping away, there is real interest in a canonical history that projects the group back in time, grounds it, authenticates it, and, with the work of Creole historians and educators, provides a past around which Creoles can rally. Though not without trepidation at such presumption on my part and at the risk of being *gauche* (at least from a postmodern perspective), I offer up what is left of the Creole history in this book to that project.

There are concerns among the young intellectuals that Creoles as a group are too passive and that there is no basis on which the community can be politically mobilized. This work indicates, first of all, that Creoles as a community have been very active politically on their own behalf over the course of their history, often heroically so. One need only recall the Creoles' Maroon ancestors resisting re-enslavement, the community's uprising against the Overthrow, General George and the Twenty-five Brave, or Abel and the black Sandinistas to realize that there is basis for optimism in this regard. This work also demonstrates, though, that there can be no facile assumptions concerning the central political concerns or tendencies of the community or on what basis it might be mobilized. Only concrete ethnographic analysis of Creole political common sense and careful analysis of the political, social, and economic conjuncture combined with political praxis can provide the basis for developing successful mobilizing strategies. Through its ethnography/ethnohistory of Creole common sense and analysis of Creole interaction with the Revolution, the work of this book speaks directly to this observation. I think it will be useful to my Creole friends in this regard.

The shift in emphasis from Creole populism to Anglo ideology as the criterion on which the Revolution was judged by Creoles described in chapter 7 goes against the grain of conventional wisdom in these matters. For activists or social scientists steeped in the politics of

cultural and racial difference in Nicaragua or elsewhere, racial/cultural identity are generally assumed to be *the* crucial determining factors in the politics of subaltern racial/cultural groups. This is certainly what the Sandinistas came to believe after their experiences with the intractable problems on the Coast forced them to drop their class-based analysis of their problems there.

This ethnohistory/ethnography of Creole politics and political common sense casts Creole politics in a different light. The Sandinistas' and their advisers' conclusions were based on the erroneous assumption that there was a single internally consistent element in Creole political consciousness. They reasoned that if the essential core was not politically reactionary pro-Americanism, then it must be racially/culturally based identity and demands instead. As we have seen, however, there has never been a single set of central political ideas or identities in Creole political common sense; it has always been multiple, multifaceted, and contradictory.

In the last decade the political expressions of the Creole community have once again taken a number of seemingly erratic and incomprehensible twists and turns; these have been unsettling for those Creoles attempting to foment progressive social change. For example, in the national elections of 1990 and 1996, the community showed little interest in the formation of local race- or culture-based political organizations and voted en masse for Managua-based political parties, which did not support autonomy or "ethnic" rights for *Costeños*. On the other hand, during the 1990's Creoles have manifested universal and sustained anger over what they consider to be the Nicaraguan state's racist and internal-colonialist control over and exploitation of the region's natural resources. Of course, as all Creoles are aware, the same Managua-based parties that most have supported vociferously and with their votes at election time have controlled the government during this period.

Only detailed ethnohistorical and ethnographic work with other groups will indicate whether the complex character of Creole political common sense is unique and whether the manner of conceptualizing political consciousness adopted in this book is more generally useful. It is clear to me that, in the case of Nicaragua's Creole community, understanding the complex transformations of the group's political expression is difficult without it. I offer this book to interested Creoles as a starting point for this kind of work in Bluefields.

This book also speaks to the contemporary Creole activist and intellectual fears about Creole loss of influence and possible extinction as a group as a result of out-migration and being overwhelmed by Mestizo immigrants. The feelings of despair in this regard are particu-

larly intense among the younger generation of Creole intellectuals, who strongly associate Creoleness with black Caribbean diasporic identity. For them, people of African descent, and therefore Creoles, are being squeezed out of the Coast.

In conversations with my Creole friends, I have argued, on the basis of my work for this book, that Creole identity is not stable but complex and multiple. It has incorporated disparate peoples in the past and forged alliances with others through the adoption of disparate transnational identities. It seems to me that therein lies the strategic basis for strengthening Creole influence in Nicaragua.

In this book I claim that, historically, Creole identity formation has been a tactical and negotiated process structured by uneven power relations. The cultural and racial content of Creole identity changed over time. The core ancestral group started out in the 1790–1820 period as Maroons—formerly enslaved Africans, European Africans, Zambo, Miskitu, and Rama Indians, and combinations thereof. They had a strongly “African” *identified* culture; however, it was not African in the formal sense, but a new creation laced with African, Amerindian, and European elements.

By the 1830’s, Creoles were slaveholding coloreds born on the Coast and identified with the British. In large part their identity was constructed in contrast to that of the largely African-born slaves whom they held and the Amerindian communities they subjected. From the 1850’s through the 1870’s, Creoles were African-descended English speakers (no matter their racial and cultural mix) who included the Creole elite’s former slaves and immigrants from the West Indies. Their culture still had an “African” feel but was also acculturating toward a German/British cultural standard set by the Moravians as Anglo hegemony consolidated.

From the 1870’s through the 1930’s, Creoles were peoples of color who were English speakers born on the Coast and Anglo acculturated by missionaries. The group included a large contingent of Anglo-acculturated colored and economically comfortable British West Indian immigrants. In Pearl Lagoon a significant portion of the group consisted of acculturated or intermarried Miskitu Indians and their progeny. In Bluefields the group’s ranks were further swelled by the progeny of U.S. and other whites and Creole women. In part this Creole identity was constructed in contrast to darker, more working-class, more “African” cultured, “Negro” immigrants and took as its “European” acculturative standard U.S. white culture. From the 1930’s onward the progeny of these “negros” became Creoles as well.

In sum, the genesis of Creole identity was not primordial, or monogenic. There is no monolithic historical set of Creole cultural traits or a

single Creole identity. Creole identity formation was and is a multifaceted process critically mediated by shifting relations of power, the specifics of the community’s history, and its social memory. Nevertheless, while highly multiple and even contradictory Creole identities are not endlessly contingent, their range is limited by these same forces.

Similarly, historically, Creoles did not wage identity politics from a stable subjectivity but instead from a variety of crosscutting subject positions. Creoles tactically dressed their group identity in more encompassing subject positions. This often lent the group greater legitimacy or became a means of creating alliances with other powerful interests.

At times, Creoles cast themselves as modern and civilized and constructed a diasporic “Anglo” identity for themselves. This recurring subject position was especially invoked in the wake of the Overthrow, when it seemed that British or possibly U.S. assistance on their behalf might be mobilized. Creoles mobilized around issues of class under the banner of planters during the planters’ strike. They also played on their indigenous identifications, especially in the 1920’s, with the advent of the various indigenous leagues. Here the appeal was to their autochthonous rights as an original people of the Atlantic Coast. They simultaneously strongly identified as black, subscribing to a black Caribbean diasporic identity that gained considerable international notoriety and influence during the 1910’s and 1920’s. They shifted over time and under the influence of Nicaraguan national hegemony from a strong Mosquitian national identity to identify as Nicaraguan nationals after the 1930’s and simultaneously invoked both Costeño regional identity and became partisans of the Liberal Party.

From these manifold shifting and crosscutting subject positions, Creoles waged political struggle around a complex of conjunctureally mediated and interconnected issues and using a large variety of political practices and discourses generated from their political common sense. The residues of these subject positions, issues, practices, and discourses are important components of contemporary Creole political common sense.

As an African American strongly identified with blackness over the years, I have been overjoyed with the tendency for Creoles again to become more and more black identified. In fact, I worked hard toward that end. Now it seems to me, however, that Creoles might be better served to excavate alternative residual identity processes residing in Creole political common sense. I have two in mind; one is a stretch; the other is already under way.

Given Creoles’ historical capacity as a group to assimilate peoples of widely different cultural, racial, and class origins, why could they not assimilate Mestizos? If a concerted effort were made while Creoles still

manage to hold on to many of the positions of authority in the local government, could not all children be taught English at school, English be used in the region's churches, Creole holidays be observed, Creole food be featured in restaurants, Creole place names be preserved, and so on? Maybe not. Creole identity is not endlessly contingent; it is limited by the historical experiences of Creoles as a people and their resultant common sense. Historically, Creole identity has been and continues to be produced in opposition to Mestizos. More important, the power of Nicaraguan nationalism and its intrinsic articulation with Mestizo culture and identity make this an untenable strategy. Perhaps if the effort were limited to Mestizos who are Costeños, it would succeed.

As part of our project to map and ethnographically substantiate the communal land claims of indigenous and Creole peoples of the Atlantic Coast, I was assigned to write a section analyzing the land claims of Creole communities. Since Creoles are understood to be of African descent, they cannot claim to have occupied their lands previous to the colonial claims of the Spanish, from which the claims of the Nicaraguan state derive.

I went to the Creole villages of Haulover and Pearl Lagoon, about an hour and a half north of Bluefields by speedboat, to talk to the people there about how they rationalized their claims to communal lands. I expected to participate in the development of complex rationalizations based on Creole residence prior to the establishment of the Nicaraguan state or contesting the existence of Spanish control over the area or claiming rights based on reparations for the horrors of slavery. I hoped to be able to use these as a basis not only for contributing to the securing of Creole land rights but also for contributing to discussion of blacks' right to land throughout the African Diaspora in the Americas.

You would think that after sixteen years I would know better than to make assumptions about Creole identity. The first time I went to Haulover in the summer of 1997, I sought out some of my friends who now occupy positions of influence in the community. In the 1980's, when I spent considerable time in Haulover, the villagers told me that they were Creoles but that their old people had been Indians. This time one of my friends told me that Haulover's claims to land were based solely on the fact that their ancestors had been Indians, even if the present inhabitants were not. My other friend told me that everyone in Haulover was actually Miskitu and so they clearly had rights to all the land in the area. The next time I went to Haulover, both my friends again told me everyone in the village was Miskitu. They also said that the people in Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon were all Creoles and that they had no rights to communal lands.

I also went to Pearl Lagoon on these trips. It is a half-hour walk from Haulover, and the two villages, although antagonistic, have a long history of interaction and there are many familial ties between the two. Pearl Lagoon is, with Bluefields, the birthplace of Creole culture and identity. In the 1980's there was no question of the Creole identity of the people of this village; in fact, they were something of a bulwark against the incursions of the Miskitu resistance in the area.

On this visit, one of my friends told me that he claimed to be Creole only because he looked black; however, his ancestors were Miskitu. This, then, was the basis for his and the rest of the village's land claim. He went on to say that the Creoles of Bluefields had no claim because they were not there when the indigenous communities of the region were established. Another longtime friend and co-worker who vaguely resembles the movie character Putney Swope and whom I always thought of as Creole claimed that the entire community of Pearl Lagoon was descended from the "Sulira" Miskitu. Yet another stated that Pearl Lagoon people were "Indian by blood and Creole by custom." There are evidently now no real Creoles in the lower Pearl Lagoon Basin—just Miskitu who have legitimate land claims as the indigenous inhabitants of this area.

Over the last thirty years, Creole emphasis on either their Anglo diasporic or black diasporic identity has separated them from the much more numerous Miskitu populations who reside predominantly in the northern Atlantic Coast. In part because Creoles were afraid of being overwhelmed by the Miskitu, they pushed to divide the Coast in half when the Autonomous Governments were institutionalized. This has separated them from an important and much more powerful ally. The trend that has already begun, of Creole identification as Miskitu, has strong grounding in Creole common sense and seems to me a potentially important strategic move.

In addition to the political work that this book proposes to do in Bluefields, its critical analysis of Creole processes of identity formation and politics addresses a number of complex intellectual issues with political implications of interest elsewhere in the African Diaspora. Since this is not the primary objective of the work, I mention them only briefly in closing.

First, I demonstrate that Creole identity formation and politics are strategic and negotiated processes that are structured by uneven power relations (Bourgeois 1989; Hale 1994; B. Williams 1991). This suggests that essentialist constructions of identity as primordial, monogenic, and monolithic (e.g., by Asante 1988; Thompson 1983) need to be reconsid-

ered. It also calls into question the assumptions of scholars who maintain that racial and "ethnic" identity are always (or should be) *the* crucial determining factors in the politics of subaltern racial and "ethnic" groups.

Second, I contribute to the newly emerging literature on transnational and diasporic processes of identity formation (see, e.g., Clifford 1994, Gilroy 1993, Hall 1995). My research indicates that Creoles have a shifting sense of racial identity and an ambiguous positioning vis-à-vis other peoples of African descent. This leads me to criticize scholarly notions of diasporic identity as a racially determined attribute (see, e.g., Harris 1993; Padmore 1956) or even as a necessary product of shared memory and experience (Gilroy 1993). I argue that it is best understood as a tactical positioning within a world of shifting transnational interrelationships.

Third, the Creole case challenges the work of those scholars who subsume the dynamics of race, as a mechanism of social differentiation, under ethnicity theory (Glazer and Moynihan 1975). This study demonstrates a clear disjuncture between racialized Mestizo representations of Creole identity and the Creoles' own more culturally based construction of their group. This suggests that, analytically, it is important to distinguish between these interrelated but distinct processes of identity formation. (Omi and Winant 1986 makes a similar argument.)

Fourth, the study contributes to the theoretical debates on hegemony and processes of national, racial, and cultural identity in Latin America, particularly as they relate to people of African descent (see, e.g., Hanchard 1994; Wade 1993; Wright 1993). Here I build on the work of those scholars who assert that dominant representations of subaltern racial and cultural groups are critically related to hegemonic constructions of the nation and cultural nationalism (Stutzman 1981; B. Williams 1991); however, the Creole case points up the critical role played by "racial hegemony," racialization, and transnational representations of people of African descent in the dynamics of Latin American race relations.

The objectives of this book, which were motivated by the politics of a moment now past, seem to have relevance to the struggles Creoles are currently waging and perhaps to those of others of us in the black Diaspora. Now that I have arrived at what is finally the end, I realize what I have known all along: the easy part is getting it all down; the hard part is a political engagement that takes on the tasks and responsibilities engendered by the ethnographic and analytical work without imposing the authority of a knowledgeable outsider.

Notes

Preface

1. In this regard, I see my work as part of a move by women scholars and those of color to "speak from the place one is located to specify our sites of enunciation as 'home,'" that is, as a means of decolonizing anthropology by "enact[ing] a different politics of location, one that redirects its gaze homeward rather than away" (Visweswaran 1994:104). Homework conceived in this way has a fundamentally different character from "fieldwork," whose "primary goal is . . . to create an ethnographic understanding of the 'Other.'" Homework instead is based in the effort of "fellow citizens" "to understand what must be done, why it must be done, and what the consequences are of doing it one way and not another" (Williams 1995:25).

2. Miskitu Coast Creole culture played a major role in the forging of Belizean Creole culture. It has also exerted considerable influence on the Creole cultures of Providencia; San Andrés; Boca del Toro, Panama; Caribbean, Costa Rica; the Cayman Islands; and, to an extent, Jamaica (Holm 1978). Despite their relative importance in this regard, only Holm (1982), Olien (1988), and, more recently, Freeland (1988, 1995) have made Creoles the object of study.

3. Throughout this book I use the term "racial/cultural" instead of "racial" or "ethnic" to name subjectivities and identities that are constructed "historically, culturally, [and] politically" (Hall 1988:29). In this I have departed from my previous use of the term "ethnicity" to describe Costeños (e.g., Gordon 1995). I want to emphasize "the specificity of race as an autonomous field" in the construction of "ethnic" identity, which is usually associated predominantly with culture while maintaining a sense of the importance for the latter. My use of racial/cultural also seeks to highlight the importance of race as a "fundamental access of social organization" (Omi and Winant 1986:52, 13). To this end I also utilize the term "racism" to designate the exercise of power over subaltern "racial/cultural" groups on the Coast, thereby moving against the tendency to use the term "ethnicity" "as a means of disavowing the realities of racism and repression" (Hall 1988:29). Finally, I have chosen to use the term "racial/cultural" as a means of signifying the mutual interpenetration and articulation of these processes of identification on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

1. Introduction: Race, Identity, and Revolution

1. The conflation of U.S. identity with whiteness is strongest among younger Creoles. Older Creoles sometimes signify their differentiation between white and black Americans by referring to the latter as "American darkies." This terminology is clearly a holdover from Anglo usage in the early-twentieth-century U.S. enclave on the Coast.

2. Obeah is an African-influenced belief system.

2. Anglo Colonialism and the Emergence of Creole Society

1. Over the last three decades, revisionist histories have highlighted both enslaved Africans' organized movements (e.g., Harding 1981; Price 1979) and everyday resistance (e.g., Blassingame 1972) against their condition. These were produced against the previous body of historical work, which was largely silent regarding the agency of the enslaved.

2. Because of the political work they are intended to do, chapters 2 and 3 are deliberately written against important recent scholarship on the history of the African Diaspora. I provide an "authoritative narrative," in contrast to Price's work (1983, 1990), whose innovative multivocal approach has been so influential in Diaspora studies. Similarly, despite David Scott's (1991) fine critique of the essentializing nationalist agenda of much of Diaspora historiography (including that of Price), my Creole history remains focused on the construction of an "authentic" past for the Creole community.

3. These historical elements, which may come to compose Creole common sense, following Raymond Williams, may be archaic or residual, the latter being the more important. The archaic is "that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived,' in a deliberately specializing way." The residual is that which "has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present" (Williams 1977:122). Both processes are important in the contemporary process of Creole common sense.

4. See Newton (1966:302), Holm (1978:179). See also Bell (1899); Conzemius (1932); Esquemeling and Dampier (1978); Hodgson (1766); letter of Robert J. Prowett, PRO (1847:30); M. W. (1732: 295–298).

5. According to Forbes (1993:233), "the terms 'mustee' and 'mestizo' as used in the British Caribbean colonies would seem to always refer to American [Amerindian]-European hybrids until perhaps the 1770's–1790's when mixed-bloods of a light color were also included, at least in some parts of the Caribbean."

6. Estimates of the size of the slave population during this period vary widely. Robert White (1789:34), the source for these data, was the legal representative of the Mosquitian slaveholders and perhaps had more complete data on the slave population than did other observers.

7. White (1793). There is conflicting evidence as to how many persons were living on the Coast before the evacuation, how many left, and how many stayed. White (1789:34) claims that at the time of the evacuation, 416 "free persons" and

1,808 slaves were living on the Coast. Elsewhere it is stated that 537 "white and free persons" and 1,677 Africans were evacuated to Belize (Burdon 1831:161–162).

8. Porta Costas (1990:54, 56, 57).

9. Porta Costas (1990:57–58). There are a number of estimates of the number of slaves held by Hodgson in Bluefields in the late 1780's (see Romero Vargas 1994:480, 490, 506, 507, 510). It may well be that this represents the fluctuations in his slave force brought on by the transfer of his site of operation to Bluefields from Black River and the initiation of cotton cultivation on Corn Island. Hodgson's wife, Elizabeth Pitt, inherited one hundred of her father's slaves from Black River (Romero Vargas 1994:490). These were evidently combined with those already owned by Hodgson.

10. In 1790 Colonel Caesar protected the Bluefields Maroons from the Tawira Miskitu, who threatened to re-enslave them. In 1802 the Zambo Miskitu regent, Prince Stephen, imprisoned and threatened with forced labor the English captain of a trading ship "for having beaten and treated with the greatest cruelty . . . a Negro of the Coast" (O'Neill 1802 in Costa Rica 1913:585).

11. Roberts (1965:103); FO 53/15, fol. 76 in Olien (1988:11).

12. Bell (1899:20); Bell to Fancourt, North Bluefields, November 18, 1843, CO 123/67.

13. Samboes are people of African and Amerindian heritage. They were probably Zambo-Miskitu in Pearl Lagoon and an African/Rama Indian mixture in Bluefields.

14. Walker to the Earl of Aberdeen, August 1, 1844, FO 53/1 78568; Christie to Palmerston, May 15, 1849, FO 53/49 73305.

15. Miskitu Coast English Creole is a linguistic system clearly distinct from standard English. Its lexicon has evolved largely from English. Syntactically, it is a compromise between English and African languages. It is closely related to Belizean English Creole (Holm 1978).

16. Mintz and Price (1985:6) state that "the term 'Creole' (which probably came from the Portuguese 'crioulo') refers, on a general level, to something that comes from the Old World but is raised in the New." In different areas of the New World during different times, the term "Creole" (or *criollo* [Sp.], *crèole* [Fr.]) has had different meanings. On the Miskitu Coast it probably had the same meaning as in Jamaica and Belize during this period, as the Mosquitia had strong historical connections with these colonies (Codd in Bolland 1977:95; also Long 1970:351). According to Brathwaite (1971:xv), in Jamaica between 1770 and 1820, the word *Creole* "was [used] in its original Spanish sense of *criollo*: born in, native to, committed to the area of living, and it was used in relation to both whites and slaves."

17. Interestingly, according to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985:63), "Belize and Miskito Coast Creoles are in the minority among Caribbean settlements in referring to themselves as Creoles and to their language as Creole." The English Creole-speaking communities of San Andrés and Providencia also refer to themselves as Creoles (Parsons 1956:66). This should come as no surprise, given their close historical connection with the Mosquitia.

18. In the mid-1840's, Alexander Hodgson had been a magistrate for nineteen

years: "Mosquito Land Grants 1844 to 1848," FO 53/44, p. 65. William and George Hodgson, mixed-race descendants of Col. Robert Hodgson, had been the acknowledged authorities in Bluefields from the 1820's (Roberts 1965:103). In 1842 George Hodgson was the governor of the Bluefields district and later became the governor of Greytown ("Deposition of George Hodgson and William Halstead," October 27, 1842, CO 123/65; Christie to Palmerston, September 5, 1848, Consular Letters, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives).

19. Bell to Fancourt, October 21, 1843, CO 123/67; Christie to Palmerston, September 5, 1848, Consular Letters, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

20. The Creoles were members of the elite and two of them were direct descendants of Robert Hodgson: George Hodgson, Sr., and Alexander Hodgson. The other members were William Halstead Ingram, James Porter, and John Dixon ("Minutes of the Council of State," September 10, 1846, FO 53/5, in Oertzen et al. 1990).

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Over the decades this process evolved to the extent that in 1874, when a new chief was sworn in, his speech was delivered in English and simultaneously interpreted into Miskitu by a Moravian missionary for the benefit of visiting Miskitu headmen (Lundberg 1875:308).

24. Martin (1870:407); Lundberg (1874:218); De Kalb (1893):275. For almost three decades two sets of Creole fathers and sons from Pearl Lagoon were among the most influential political figures in the Mosquito Reserve. Charles Patterson succeeded his father, Henry, as vice-president of the reserve in 1874, holding that position or the presidency of the Executive Council until 1894. James W. Cuthbert was attorney general during much of this period, while his son James served as secretary of the council (Lundberg 1874:307; Renkewitz 1874:222; De Kalb 1893:237).

25. "Minutes of a meeting held on the subject of slavery and compensation for slaves at Bluefields, Mosquito Shore the 10th August 1841," CO 123/67, fols. 1-2, p. 5, fols. 3-4, p. 6; Christie and Venables to the Earl of Clarendon, September 18, 1855, FO 53/49, fol. 1; Bell to Walker, November 12, 1842, CO 123/65; Bowden to Walker, September 5, 1844, CO 123/62, fol. 1. Slave owners on the island, many of whom came from San Andrés, were both white and colored. The slaves at Corn Island had provided the labor for a small but thriving plantation economy based on sea island cotton, which rapidly withered following emancipation (Parsons 1956:19).

26. Estimates of the population of Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon vary, hence the uncertainty in the percentage of the populations that were slaves. In 1844 Walker claimed that "in this Village [Bluefields] there is a population of upwards of three hundred souls, all of whom are descendants of British settlers or slaves. At Pearl Cay Lagoon . . . there are about two hundred and at Boca del Toro nearly three hundred of the same description" (Walker to Lord Bishop of London, September 11, 1844, FO 53/1 in Oertzen, Rossbach, and Wunderlich 1990:xx). In 1841, however, the Miskitu king granted land to a Bluefields population of about four hundred persons (Mosquito Land Grants 1844-1848, FO 53/44, pp. 123-124). In 1848 Consul Christie reported five hundred residents at Bluefields plus one hundred newly arrived Prussian immigrants (Christie to Palmerston, no. 7,

September, 5 1848, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives).

27. Chatfield to Palmerston, April 19, 1848, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives; Bell (1899:26); Parsons (1956).

28. Christie to Palmerston, May 15, 1849, FO 53/49 73305, fol. 5; Walker to the Earl of Aberdeen, August 1, 1844, FO 53/1 78568, fols. 3-4; Pfeiffer, Lundberg, and Jurgensen (1857:243); De Kalb (1893:283); Bell to Walker, November 12, 1842, CO 123/65; Martin (1990:134); Christie to Palmerston, May 15, 1849, in "Papers Respecting Mosquito Land Claims: 1849-51," 1860, FO 53/49, fol. 5; Smith (1872:314).

29. According to a visiting member of the Moravian Mission Board, more than three hundred thousand coconuts were exported from Bluefields to New York annually (Wullschlagel 1990:130).

30. Sieborger (1884:175); Renkewitz (1867:470). It is probable that most Creole "dealers in Indian-rubber" operated on a very small scale; however, a few of the elite, like Henry Patterson, became "very wealthy, having made a good deal of money in the Indian rubber-trade" (Renkewitz 1874:218-224, quotation on 222).

31. Walker to the Earl of Aberdeen, August 1, 1844, FO 53/1 78568; Clarence in Lundberg (1875:309). According to a British observer in the 1840's, the Creole elite magistrates were "disposed to make any exertion of power, only in the punishment and the oppression of the class of freed slaves and of the Indians, while greater malefaction of their own class, especially those who have good family connexions . . . enjoy entire immunity" (Bell to Fancourt, North Bluefields, October 21, 1843, CO 123/67).

32. Wullschlagel (1856:34-35).

33. Traders Peter and Samuel Shepherd were particularly influential: Bell to Fancourt, North Bluefields, October 21, 1843, CO 123/67.

34. Christie to Palmerston, September 5, 1848, Consular Letters, fols. 136-137, CIDCA-Bluefields Archive; Feurig (1862:309).

35. Anonymous (1882:285).

36. Kandler (1851:526); Wullschlagel (1856:34); Mueller (1932:94).

37. See, e.g., Pfeiffer (1849:202); Grunewald (1863:56); Grunewald (1872:198).

38. Wullschlagel (1856:35); Anonymous (1882:280).

39. M.C.M.A. (1895:563-564).

40. See, e.g., Lundberg (1866:53); Peper (1879:263).

41. Martin (1872:363).

42. See, e.g., Roberts (1965:108); Blair (1873:433); Ziock (1882:310).

43. Bell to the Earl of Elgin, North Bluefields, April 19, 1843, CO 123/65. For discussion of a similar situation that developed in Belize, see Bolland (1977) and Ashdown (1979: esp. pp. 17-19).

44. Feurig (1857b:349).

45. Bell to Fancourt, North Bluefields, October 21 and November 18 1843, CO 123/67.

46. Bell to the Earl of Elgin, North Bluefields, April 19, 1843, CO 123/65.

47. Pfeiffer, Lundberg, and Jurgensen (1857:243).

48. Bell to Governor Sir Charles Grey, Bluefields, February 25, 1848, Consular Letters, fol. 8, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives; Bell (1899:19); Christie to Palmerston, September 5, 1848, Consular Letters, fol. 136, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

49. Christie to Palmerston, September 5, 1848, Consular Letters, fols. 136-

137, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

50. Circular letter of Synodal Committee (1851:164). See Comaroff (1985:131) for a discussion of the similar relationship between missionary activity, acculturation to British Protestant culture, and the articulation between a local society and the global forces of European political economy in southern Africa.

3. Negotiating Modernity: Disparate Racial Politics in the Twentieth Century

1. Rule is domination by a group or groups over others by means of coercion. Hegemony is domination by a group or groups over others through persuasion, negotiation, and the organization of consent. Relations of domination in any social formation are achieved through the complex interplay of rule and hegemony.

2. In 1855 Bluefields had a population of between six hundred and seven hundred, of which one hundred were Indians. The total Creole population in the Mosquitia was about twelve hundred (Wullschlagel 1856:34-35).

3. The Moravian mission on the Coast was originally established by the Moravian Mission Board, headquartered in Herrenhut, Germany. Until World War I most of the missionaries were Germans; however, there were missionaries of other nationalities, particularly black Jamaicans. A number of the German missionaries had also spent considerable time involved in mission work in Jamaica. The missionaries used English or, later, Miskitu in their mission work, and in response to what they understood to be the British colonial status of the Mosquitia did their best to inculcate British culture and allegiances.

4. In 1874 the Moravians changed the spelling of Mosquito to Moskito; since then they have called the area the Moskito Coast or Moskito.

5. Martin (1882:254). This process of acculturation was by no means complete. Over the years, the Moravians were often distressed by the absence of orthodoxy and constancy in the conversion of Coast people.

6. Michael J. Clancy to Thomas O'Hara, Bluefields, August 27, 1897, no. 99, BCPR.

7. "Negros" (Cabezas in Pérez-Valle 1978:156, 158, 159); "negros de Jamaica" (Zelaya in Pérez-Valle 1978:149, 214); "jamaiqueños" and "extranjeros" (Madriz in Pérez-Valle 1978:169, 190, 193).

8. There was a substantial population of blacks among the "foreign born" composed of persons from Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Roatán, and Belize, in order of numerical importance. U.S. blacks, though less important numerically than any of the foregoing, probably made up two-thirds of the U.S. residents of the reserve during this period. There were also sixty-three white and one hundred Mestizo residents (*Bluefields Messenger* 1890).

9. *La Gaceta Oficial* 32, no. 28 (April 21, 1894) in Pérez-Valle (1978):183.

10. For example, a U.S. man-of-war was stationed off of Bluefields in 1909 when a strike by Creole planters threatened the stability of U.S. enterprise in the area (Clancy to State Department, May 22, 1909, no. 68, BCPR; Clancy to Secretary of State, May 14, 1909, BCPR). U.S. troops occupied Bluefields in 1894, 1910, and 1926.

11. Clancy to William Merry, San José, Costa Rica, February 1905, no. 25, BCPR.

12. Clancy to State Department, August 16, 1909, no. 78, BCPR; Dozier (1985:157-158).

13. Clancy to John T. King, Mobile, Alabama, September 24, 1897, no. 126, BCPR; Clancy to State Department, June 3, 1909, no. 71, BCPR.

14. Moravian Church and Mission Agency (1896:96); Clancy to Hill, November 24, 1904, no. 43, BCPR; Clancy to Merry, March 29, 1909, no. 43, BCPR.

15. Clancy to Secretary of State, February 29, 1909, BCPR; Clancy to Secretary of State, February 26, 1909, no. 43, BCPR; Clancy to Merry, August 28, 1905, no. 36, BCPR.

16. Clancy to Hill, November 2, 1904, no. 32, BCPR. The concession was made to Charles Weinberger in return for a guaranteed loan of one million dollars made to the Nicaraguan government (Clancy to Asst. Secretary of State, August 21, 1908, no. 5, BCPR). Anyone could purchase bananas, but they could not use the river to transport them.

17. Clancy to Asst. Secretary of State, May 15, 1909, no. 67, BCPR; Clancy to State Department, June 3, 1909, no. 71, BCPR.

18. Chalkley to Young, no. 15, November 10, 1915, Crowell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

19. McCoy, Pearl Lagoon to British Consul, Bluefields, April 16, 1911, Crowell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields; "Signed Depositions made before the British Titles Commissioner H. I. Chalkley, Bluefields," June 17, 1905, no. 33, Crowell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields; Chalkley to Young 1915, H. C. Chalkley, Special Commissioner of H.B.M. Government, to C. Alban Young, His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Guatemala, no. 18, November 23, 1915. Some of the choicest tracts went to president Zelaya himself and his family. T. López and Zelaya owned eight thousand hectares between Bluefields and the Río Cukra, which they then traded for land farther to the south at the anticipated construction site of a transisthmus railroad (H. C. Chalkley, Special Commissioner of H.B.M. Government, to C. Alban Young, His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Guatemala, no. 18, November 23, 1915).

20. See, e.g., Fred Thomas to Charles Patterson, Representative of the Mosquito Indians, Bluefields, May 3, 1911; Patterson et al. to Chalkley, 1911, Crowell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

21. For more on the process of land distribution under the terms of this treaty, see Hale (1991, 1994). Hale argues that the allotments were inadequate to the agricultural needs of Coast communities.

22. People of Bluefields and Rama Indians to H. O. Chalkley, British Consul, Bluefields, April 22, 1911, Crowell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

23. Some few members of the Bluefields Creole elite, generally those most closely associated with U.S. economic interests, were willing and able to join the new governmental structures almost immediately. H. C. Ingram was acting mayor of Bluefields in 1895 (Harrison to Kimberley, 1895 in Oertzen, Rossbach, and Wunderlich 1990:402, 407-408). Stephen A. Hodgson was elected mayor in 1898, as was John Taylor, with the support of the Union Club, in 1904 (Clancy to Sorsby, January 7, 1898, no. 2, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, December 5, 1904, no. 2, BCPR). Alfred W. Hooker held an array of positions in both the local and the national governments.

24. Lee to Secretary of State, March 19, 1911, BCPR.
25. Clancy to State Department, December 18, 1908, no. 31, BCPR; Clancy to Asst. Secretary of State, November 6, 1908, no. 23, BCPR; Moffat to State Department, November 17, 1909, no. 34, BCPR.
26. H. Chafmt to Bingham 1909; H. chafmt, Actg. British Vice Consul Bluefields, to H. F. Bingham, British Consul, San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua.
27. Mission Board (1900: 351-353). Later that same year, during a fire in Bluefields, Nicaraguan police threatened and beat church members and compelled them to destroy the Moravian elementary school building (Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel 1900: 406).
28. Clancy to Merry, August 16, 1905, no. 35, BCPR; Moffat to State Department, October 21, 1909, no. 17, BCPR.
29. In 1879 the Moravians reported fewer than half of their 227-member Pearl Lagoon congregation as being Creole (98); the rest were Miskitu (Anonymous 1880:338). By 1894 the Pearl Lagoon congregation had more than doubled, to 484 members, and was now described by the missionaries as being "mostly Creole" [Anonymous 1894:402].
30. "Coloreds" is a term used to designate people who are mixed race (white and black) and generally "middle class." It is a third racial category in the Anglophone Caribbean.
31. Clancy to King, October 4, 1897, no. 135, BCPR; Lawder to Young, June 22, 1916, no. 1/16, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.
32. Over time Creoles evidently lost many of these jobs to Mestizos from the Pacific. In 1927 Ruiz y Ruiz characterized the latter, not the former, as, typically, state employees, lower-level employees of foreign companies, and professionals (1927:73).
33. As late as the 1930s outside observers commented on this phenomenon (Conzemius 1932:7; Mueller 1921:57).
34. There were also two hundred whites, fifteen hundred Mestizos, five hundred Chinese, and three hundred Amerindians (Ruiz y Ruiz 1927:72).
35. Guido Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1918.
36. Clancy to Hill, February 11, 1905, no. 97, BCPR.
37. Clancy to Sorsby, March 14 1898, no. 54, BCPR.
38. Clipping from *The Recorder* (Bluefields), August 21, 1897, in Clancy to O'Hara, August 20, 1897, no. 93, BCPR.
39. Clancy to O'Hara, August 10, 1897, no. 110, BCPR.
40. Citizens of Bluefields to Samuel T. Lee, Bluefields, April 7, 1911, BCPR.
41. British Colonial Secretary's Office to Consul, Bluefields, October 5, 1912, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.
42. Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1926; Society for Propagating the Gospel (1927:61).
43. Lee to Secretary of State, March 19, 1911, BCPR.
44. Miskito Indian Patriotic League, Bluefields, 1926, CIDCA-Bluefields.
45. J. O. Thomas to Chalkley, Bluefields, October 22, 1915, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.
46. Petitioners to J. O. Sanders, Bluefields, April 2, 1919, BCPR.
47. Grossman, "Annual Report of the Superintendent for 1919" (1920), p. 438.

48. Clancy to Hill, December 5, 1904, no. 50, BCPR; Clancy to State Department, December 18, 1908, no. 31, BCPR.
49. Clancy to Merry, December 24, 1904, no. 13, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, November 14, 1904, no. 37, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, November 15, 1904, no. 38, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, December 7, 1904, no. 51, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, December 12, 1904, nos. 56 and 57, BCPR; Clancy to Hill, December 19, 1904, no. 68, BCPR; and Clancy to State Department, June 12, 1909, no. 74, BCPR.
50. Clancy to Merry, January 16, 1905, no. 19, BCPR.
51. Clancy to Asst. Secretary of State, May 15, 1909, no. 67, BCPR; Clancy to Merry, July 19, 1909, no. 8, BCPR.
52. Clancy to State Department, May 22, 1909, no. 68, BCPR; Clancy to State Department, June 3, 1909, no. 71, BCPR.
53. Clancy to Asst. Secretary of State, May 15, 1909, no. 67, BCPR.
54. Moffat to State Department, October 16, 1909, no. 12, BCPR.
55. Moffat to State Department, October 16, 1909, no. 11, BCPR.
56. Moffat to State Department, November 7, 1909, no. 29, BCPR. According to Consul Moffat, "The unequivocal desire of the leaders of this movement and the people generally is for a declaration of their independence and the establishment of a separate republic."
57. Moffat to State Department, October 11, 1909, no. 7, BCPR.
58. Moffat to State Department, October 16, 1909, no. 12; November 18, 1909, no. 35, BCPR.
59. Deverall in "Mass Meeting at the Union Club," *The American*, Bluefields, March 19, 1911; clipping in Lee to Secretary of State, March 19, 1911, unnumbered, BCPR.
60. Moffat to State Department, April 12, 1910, no. 124, BCPR.
61. Moffat to State Department, June 12, 1910, no. 178, BCPR; Teplitz (1973: 385-387, 405-408).
62. Moffat to State Department, June 12, 1910, no. 178, BCPR.
63. Moffat to State Department, May 19, 1910, no. 146, BCPR.
64. Moffat to State Department, April 12, 1910, no. 124, BCPR.
65. The Inhabitants of Pearl Lagoon Mosquito Coast to his Britannic Majesty's Government, Bluefields, February 23, 1911, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.
66. The Conservative government was generally unpopular in Nicaragua and would not have stood without U.S. support. Opposition was spearheaded by the agro-export bourgeoisie and urban petty bourgeoisie. Important segments of these class fragments were to be found in Bluefields, center of the most advanced capitalist sector in the country (Araya Pochet and Peña 1979:5).
67. The Moravian mission had very strained relations with the Conservative governments (Society for Propagating the Gospel 1911:105; 1929:57).
68. Petitioners to J. O. Sanders, Bluefields, April 2, 1919, BCPR.
69. Memorialist Committee, 1919; Memorial to the President, Bluefields, October 11, 1919, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields Archive..
70. UNIA Foreign Divisions 1926, UNIA Central Division Files, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.
71. Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua, 1920," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1920.
72. Ibid.

73. G. A. Heidenreich, "Annual Report of the Bluefields Congregation for 1924," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1924.

74. Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua, 1920," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1920; Society for Propagating the Gospel (1930:8; 1931:96).

75. Heath in Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1920.

76. Solórzano was elected in 1924 with Vice-President Juan Bautista Sacasa as a Liberal.

77. Miskito Indian Patriotic League to U.S. Secretary of State, February 10, 1926, Richard Stephenson private collection.

78. Hodgson et al. to McConnico, Bluefields, May 4, 1926, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

79. J. O. Thomas to Anna Crowdell, February 4, 1927, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

80. Samuel Howell, "General George Hodgson: His Life and Achievements," pamphlet, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives, n.d.

81. Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1926.

82. *Ibid.*

83. "Creoles, Indians etc of Pearl Lagoon to Owen Reese, British Consul," Bluefields, 1927, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

84. J. O. Thomas to Anna Crowdell, February 4, 1927, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

85. "Indians and Creoles to E. Owen Reese British Consul," February 1, 1928, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

86. Alfred W. Hooker was one of the most influential politicians in Atlantic Coast history. In a career that spanned more than thirty years, he held such local positions as secretary to Juan Pablo Reyes, one of the first governors of the Coast; president of the Union Club; Bluefields' mayor, tax collector for the Department of Zelaya. On the national level, he served as minister of education, minister of development, deputy of the National Assembly, and senator.

87. Creoles of Bluefields to Alfred W. Hooker, "La Voz del Atlántico," June 1930, Crowdell Papers, CIDCA-Bluefields.

88. Horatio Hodgson, "Memorial of the People of the Department of Zelaya to That Just and Honorable Assembly, Our National Congress," 1935, CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

89. In 1914, responsibility for the mission was shifted from the Moravian Mission Board, headquartered in Herrnhut, Germany, to the North American Synod, headquartered in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

90. See, e.g., Society for Propagating the Gospel (1925:77); Grossman, "Annual Report of the Province of Nicaragua," Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., 1926.

4. Creole History and Social Memory

1. For more than 150 years, the liberation of the island's enslaved community has been celebrated on August 27.

2. All interviews in this section were conducted in English Creole. I have

transcribed them in standard English orthography. While much of the grammatical difference between standard English and English Creole is maintained, the significant differences in pronunciation are lost. The names of all the Creoles I interviewed whose accounts I use in this section have been replaced with pseudonyms. (All Spanish/English translations are my own.)

Terry García was one of the original Bluefields rastas and a leader of the group that was active throughout the revolutionary period. Terry was extremely interested in the politics of the Diaspora and organized a number of events in Bluefields, including an annual commemoration of the death of Bob Marley and one protesting apartheid in South Africa. Thoughtful and intellectually curious, he had graduated from high school and in the early 1980's worked for a while for the government. He was also a talented graphic artist. Toward the end of the 1980's and in 1991, when this interview was conducted, he began to support himself by painting signs.

3. Here I have in mind Richard Price's representation of Saramakan oral historical knowledge. A close reading of Price's description of his methodology, however, makes it clear that the historical knowledge he collected was also fragmentary and contradictory. Though transparent in the constructed account, the ethnographer had to work hard and authoritatively to produce an internally consistent and chronological narrative of Saramaka history that, though he uses Saramaka voices, he admits "would amaze (and be new to) any single living Saramaka" (1983:25).

4. A number of renditions of the history of the Atlantic Coast have been published in Nicaragua. Most are narratives of conflicting colonial powers and nationalisms rather than histories of Coast peoples. The most important of these works include Gámez (1939), Robert M. Hooker (1945), and Brautigam Beer (1970a and b).

5. These recurring themes are also present in the historical narrative I presented in chapters 2 and 3; however, many specific events that I include in my "academic" account were not significant enough to Creoles at the time they spoke with me about Creole history for them to recount or to have kept them from fading, at least for the moment, from their memories. Forgotten or deemphasized memories can, however, also be read for their contemporary significance.

6. Herman Dixon is my wife's third cousin. At the time of my interview with him in 1991, he was in his mid-thirties. He was one of the original Creole counterrevolutionaries and spent time in Costa Rica and the "bush" south of Bluefields with the Contras. He was not very well educated and had worked as a fisherman. After the change in government in 1990, in which the UNO (Unión Nacional Opositora, United National Opposition) coalition of political parties in opposition to the Sandinistas took power, he served as regional governor Alvin Guthrie's bodyguard.

7. In 1991 Lucy Williams was in her late sixties or early seventies. She was well respected in the community and worked as a teacher at the Moravian High School. She was known nationally for her dance troupes, which presented "dignified" versions of a number of Creole dance styles. She was also known as a keeper of the traditions and history of Creole dance and music. She was a friend and intellectual collaborator of Donovan Brautigam Beer.

8. Burt Hodgson had been a schoolteacher before he left Bluefields for Costa Rica a few years after the Triumph. There he was active as a leader with the Southern Indigenous and Creole Community (SICC, after the Triumph of the Sandinistas, the organized Creole counterrevolution) during the mid- to late-1980's. He did not serve in a military capacity with SICC. At the time of my interview with him in 1991, he was working as an adviser to the Regional Assembly of the Autonomous Government.

9. René Hodgson at the time of this discussion with him was in his early forties. René was the son of a very famous Creole boat owner and captain and therefore had standing in the community. Fairly well educated, he had held a number of civil service positions with the revolutionary government. We worked together for a number of years on fishing development projects. He was anti-Sandinista and held a high position in local government after the elections of 1990.

10. Berta Blanford was a well-educated, middle-aged schoolteacher and administrator in the bilingual and bicultural program instituted during the revolutionary era for Creole-speaking children. She attended the Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano in San José, Costa Rica, in the early 1970's and on her return worked for nationalist pastor Rev. Joe Kelly. She subsequently taught at the Moravian High School until the triumph of the Revolution. She was an early member of SICC, a group dedicated to Creole cultural preservation and social uplift before the Triumph of the Sandinista Revolution.

11. Thomas Jackson was in his mid-twenties at the time of my interview with him in 1991. He had gone through the first years of high school and worked as a fisherman. One of a number of Creole youth who had run away from the SMP (Servicio Militar Patriótico, Patriotic Military Service), he joined the Contras and operated for a time with them in the Pearl Lagoon area before becoming disillusioned and returning to Bluefields.

12. Kevin Whitiker was introduced in chapter 1. I lived with him and his wife for a number of years in the early 1980's. Kevin at the time of this discussion in 1991 was in his seventies. He had been a cook for the senior Somoza and was anti-Sandinista.

13. James Johnson was in his mid-thirties during this 1991 conversation. He was born on Corn Island to an elite Creole father who later abandoned his family. James managed to get a good education, including a couple of years of university-level training in economics in Managua. He was the original FSLN commandant in charge of Corn Island. He became a critical member of the FSLN and had many run-ins with the party hierarchy. He and I worked together on fisheries projects for many years. After the elections of 1990, he became a successful lobster boat owner and captain. He is one of my best friends and one of those whose political position this book shares.

14. Frank Parsons, a light-skinned Creole from Pearl Lagoon, was in his sixties or seventies when we had this discussion in 1991. He was the "outside" (illegitimate) son of an elite white Creole businessman. His mother was a member of a Creole elite family from Pearl Lagoon. Mr. Frank was a fine but slow carpenter who spent years working intermittently on my house in Bluefields. Although he was avidly pro-American and anti-Sandinista, we were close friends.

15. Francis Sui Williams was one of the most respected and influential members of Bluefields' Creole community. Before the Triumph of the Revolution, he had served as *jefe político* (governor) of the Department of Zelaya. He was also a longtime professor of history at the Moravian High School. In the late 1980's he became director of CIDCA in Bluefields. He was also a winning candidate on the FSLN regional ticket in the 1990 elections and served as a member of the Regional Assembly of the Autonomous Government. In his fifties, Sui was an avid Creole historian and had published a number of articles on Creole oral history. We also had a good deal of intellectual interchange. I asked him to read and comment on numerous historical and ethnographic pieces I produced, and we engaged in hours of discussion on Creole history.

16. Herman Wilson, in his early seventies at the time of this discussion in 1991, was the preeminent Creole sea captain and had experience captaining boats around the globe. He had been the owner of four fishing boats before the Revolution. He was married to the daughter of the first "native" bishop of the Moravian Church, who herself was a longtime teacher at the Moravian High School. This was an important and respected Creole family. Mr. Herman was extremely well read and enjoyed American mystery novels. We spent a great deal of time sitting on his front verandah talking about Creoles and Bluefields in previous times, and about fishing. He often read and commented on my written work on fishing and Creole history.

17. May East died in the early 1990's. She was in her eighties when this interview was conducted by Azalee Hodgson, the CIDCA-Bluefields librarian. Ms. East had been a member of the Beholden branch of the UNIA.

18. Ronny Green was a former member of the EEBI (Escuela de Entrenamiento Básico de la Infantería, Infantry Basic Training School), an elite anti-insurgency wing of the National Guard. He was for many years a commandant in the counterrevolution and operated in the area south of Bluefields. In his mid- to late twenties, he worked as a fisherman and farmer, but when I spoke to him in 1991, he was having a hard time settling back down into civilian life.

19. The historiographical work of Robert Montgomery Hooker (1945), Donovan Brautigam Beer (1970a and b), and John Wilson (1975) clearly indicates that if any of these persons had desired to do so they could have written a credible scholarly account of Creole history. Francis Sui's oral narration of Creole history during a taped discussion in 1991 has all the elements of a scholarly narrative. His published and unpublished written historical work from the late 1980's clearly demonstrates the ability to produce a comprehensive Creole history, though he has not attempted to do so.

5. The Discursive Struggle over Race and Nation

1. Brazil and Cuba, where elites have appropriated forms of "African" expressive culture in their constructions of national identity, are exceptions to this rule.

2. A. Somoza D. quoted in Anonymous (1969c:4). All translations are the author's unless otherwise noted.

3. A. Somoza D. quoted in *ibid.*, p. 8. Somoza is referring here to two large-scale projects. The first, the Proyecto Piloto de Castellanización (Hispanicization

Pilot Project, sponsored by UNESCO, was a literacy project that also had as objectives the Hispanicization, civilization, and nationalization of the Miskitu. This speech also announced the beginning of the Francia Sirpi Project, which would resettle a number of Miskitu communities that had lost access to their agricultural zone across the Río Coco with the settlement of the territorial dispute with Honduras. These Miskitu were to be resettled, financed, and taught to be Mestizo peasant producers.

4. A. Somoza D. quoted in Anonymous (1969e:8).

5. "Cultural underdevelopment" from A. Somoza D. quoted in *ibid.*; "cultural progress" from Anonymous (1969b:1).

6. Bluefields was reportedly 70 percent Creole in 1964 (Incer in Pérez-Valle 1978:364).

7. The Somoza regime was in general strongly supported by the U.S. government throughout this period. The relationship was at its shakiest during the Kennedy administration, which played a role in keeping Tachito, whom Kennedy once referred to as the "co-dictator of Nicaragua," from succeeding his brother Luis as president. Tachito was particularly close to conservative Republicans, especially Richard Nixon, to whom the Somoza family reportedly donated one million dollars for the 1972 re-election campaign (Diederich 1981:64, 67-68, 88-89). Chamorro C., on the other hand, was linked to U.S. liberals such as columnist Jack Anderson of the *Washington Post* and was a great admirer of the Kennedys (Chamorro Z. 1982:168).

8. See, e.g., Anonymous (1970a:17).

9. Chamorro C. (1970c:1b). They are not, however, of the two groups believed by nationalists to be the principal "civilized" ancestor cultures: the Chorotega and the Nicaragua (Cuadra 1971). We can assume that these latter are the groups alluded to in the quotation as having displaced the ancestral Miskitu.

10. This preoccupation with the "racially" mixed Miskitu heritage is clearly in dialogue with the historical construction of the "Miskitu" as hated and feared "Zambo" (African Amerindian mix), which emerged during the Spanish colonial period and remains an important component of some Mestizo images of the Miskitu (see Helms 1977).

11. Chamorro C. paraphrased in Ruiz (1970:2b).

12. Chamorro C. (1970c:3).

13. These alleged deficiencies were a central theme of the nationalist literature of the period (see, e.g., Cuadra 1971). They were prominently elaborated in a series of articles on the Nicaraguan national character published in *La Prensa* a month after the final installment of Chamorro's Miskitu series (see, e.g., Peña 1970:3b).

14. See, e.g., Munguía Novoa (1970); Pérez-Estrada (1970:1b, 5b).

15. Pérez-Estrada (1970:1b, 5b). This article bears quoting at length because its representation of Nicaraguans of African descent and their place in the nation is echoed in much of the alternative discourse about Creoles. Francisco Pérez-Estrada, however, called "el indio" by his peers, was one of the most progressive of the alternative bloc intellectuals. He also was dark skinned and traced his roots to the town of Nandaime, a population with clear African roots. His interest in Nicaraguans of African descent was clearly personal and more intense than that of others in this group.

16. This transformation is by no means complete. For example, in one article, the Creoles' English Creole language is still described as a degenerate form of English: "el destartalado 'creole,' mezcla de inglés y de espontáneas ocurrencias" (the rambling "Creole" mix of English and spontaneous utterances) (Velásquez 1972:6).

17. In 1970 alone, *La Prensa* published numerous essays by Donovan Brautigam Beer, the poetry of Carl Rigby and David McField, photographs of June Beer's paintings, and articles about the music of Brautigam Beer and the members of the musical group Bárbaros del Ritmo, all leading Creole artists.

18. The name "negros" (blacks) had a pejorative connotation for most Creoles during this period. Most referred to themselves and their group as "Creoles" or "Costeños" and more rarely as "morenos." "Negro" in popular usage also has pejorative connotations for Mestizo Nicaraguans. *Moreno* translated literally means "brown." In Nicaragua it is also a polite term for people of African descent.

19. Alemán Ocampo (1969:2b); Velásquez (1972:6). These travel descriptions clearly derive from the Latin American "negritude" literary movement. Articles in *La Prensa* about literary "negritude" indicate that members of the alternative bloc's intellectual circle were very familiar with the works of Guillén, Palés Matos, Guirao, and even Senghor (Arellano 1970:3b; Pallais 1970:1b; Bertocci 1971:1b).

20. Alemán (1970:10); Anonymous (1970b:1). Referring to someone as "negrito" is equivalent to calling a black adult "boy" in the United States. It should also be remembered that for Creoles during this period, "negro" had a connotation akin to "nigger." A "merienda de negros," literally, a "blacks' snack," is a racist metaphor with carnivalesque and cannibalistic undertones. Traditionally, the saying connotes an act of cannibalism in which whites are dismembered and eaten with great gusto by black heathens amid a celebratory scene of dancing, drumming, and general disorder. In this particular case, it connotes a free-for-all in which black primitives rush and fight each other to grab whatever they can.

21. Somoza D. (1974:5, 28). The programs proposed by Somoza in his speech demonstrate an impressive practical command of the Coast's needs. It is interesting to note that many of these programs were carried out or attempted by the Sandinista government during the 1980's.

22. Daniel Ortega quoted in Anonymous (1979b:4).

23. Daniel Ortega quoted in Anonymous (1979e:8).

24. Daniel Ortega quoted in Anonymous (1979d:4).

25. Daniel Ortega quoted in Anonymous (1979d:4, 1).

26. Daniel Ortega quoted in Anonymous (1979e:8).

6. Ambiguous Militancy on the Threshold of Revolution

1. The core group of Creole pastors involved in pushing for changes in the Moravian Church included the Revs. Stedman Bent, Leroy Miller, Norman Bent, Joseph Kelly, and Bishop John Wilson. They were largely supported in their positions by the older longtime Bishop Hedley Wilson and at various times by some of the Miskitu pastors.

2. The inclusion of Costeños in the leadership of the Moravian Church in

Nicaragua was a very slow process. It was not until 1952 that the first Nicaraguan, Hedley Wilson, was elected to the Provincial Board of the Moravian Mission. In 1962 Wilson was consecrated bishop and the name of the Moravian mission in Nicaragua was changed to the Moravian Church in Nicaragua. In 1969 John Wilson was the first national to be director of the Bible Institute in Bilwaskarma. In his generally laudatory thesis on the history of the Moravian presence in Nicaragua, John Wilson's understated opinion on these matters was that "the autochthonization should have been implemented much earlier. Perhaps lack of confidence in the national workers was one of the factors which most impeded a rapid autochthonization" (1975:281-283).

3. "Estatutos de la Organización Progresista Costeña (OPROCO) de la Ciudad de Bluefields, Departamento de Zelaya, República de Nicaragua," CIDCA-Bluefields Archives.

4. In 1975 *La Información* was sold by the Bluefields vicariate to OPROCO, however, it had been a strong supporter and outlet for OPROCO opinion since the latter's inception. *La Información's* obsequiously partisan position was at least in part due to the fact that during the 1970's Rupert Linton Whitaker, the newspaper's principal voice, simultaneously held executive positions with the Nationalist Liberal Party, OPROCO, and *La Información* both before and after it was sold to OPROCO. He was at various times vice-secretary and secretary of propaganda for the PLN in the Department of Zelaya, editorial and advertising chief and director of *La Información*, and secretary and vice-secretary of OPROCO.

5. The economic development and welfare of the general Bluefields community was not the only reason OPROCO members and other elite Creoles had an interest in the road to Kukra. As the roadway was pushed south from Bluefields toward the river, many members of the group legalized claims to national lands abutting it in hopes of reaping economic benefits from the opening up of this area.

6. Lindolfo Campbell, *La Información* (June 29, 1975). Campbell served in a number of executive positions, including president of the group, during the 1970's.

7. L. Campbell, *La Información* (September 13, 1971).

8. L. Campbell, *La Información* (May 31, 1972).

9. E. Campbell (1972). Campbell's article is remarkable in that it presages the FSLN-flavored discourse of the young Creoles who, like himself, would become Sandinistas by the end of the decade. Enrique Campbell, the elder brother of the only Creole Sandinista commandant, Lumberto Campbell, was Nicaragua's only professionally trained geologist who specialized in thermoelectric power. Tragically, he was killed in action against Contra forces while serving with the civilian militias during the mid-1980's.

10. Most of these columns were written by Rupert Linton Whitaker.

11. Brautigam Beer (1973). This tendency in Brautigam Beer's work was already evident in his seminal work on Coast history published in installments in *La Prensa* beginning on March 18, 1970. See particularly June 12, 1970, p. 2.

12. After having gone to such lengths to debunk Mestizo racial essentialism, Brautigam Beer slipped into some of his own by suggesting that the racial problems of the United States would eventually be solved through a process of "whitening": "With time will come changes. This period of racial discrimina-

tion will be overcome, perhaps through interracial marriage, inasmuch as history indicates that the black race tends to disappear when mixed with the white" (*La Información* [May 26, 1976]).

13. Murrillo (1975). Rosario Murrillo was the president of the Sandinista artists' union during the revolutionary government and Daniel Ortega's wife. David McField was a member of the FSLN and ambassador to several African nations for the Revolutionary Government.

14. Liberation Theology, so important in the growing radicalization of Nicaraguan society in the 1970's, was subsequently the focus of a number of favorable *La Información* articles. See, e.g., August 16, 1972, and January 26, 1976.

15. *La Prensa* (June 23, 1976:2). This unsigned editorial was probably written by P. J. Chamorro. It answers directly most of Johnson's charges and sums up most of the subsequent Mestizo objections to the article. The editorial states that "good" English is not spoken on the Coast. It also claims that all of the Costeño blacks have their origins in slavery and Africa and are not descendants of the English but in fact were enslaved by them. The editorial states that to make racial distinctions between Nicaraguans, as Johnson does, is racist. The implications here are that Johnson and the British are racist while Mestizo Nicaraguans are not. The editorial also states that Nicaragua has its own autochthonous culture, which is Mestizo, Indio-Hispano, and, by implication, Catholic and Spanish speaking. It does allow for the possibility of room for the cultures of minorities that have been "inculcated by the British dominators."

16. Rollin Tobie quoted in *La Información* (July 22, 1976). Silva's poem was published in *La Prensa* four days before Johnson's article.

17. I use "middle class" here to mean people who have an intermediate position between large-scale owners of means of production and holders of political power, on the one hand, and politically powerless proletarianized workers and subsistence producers, on the other. Middle-class people on the Coast in this sense are characteristically professionals, white-collar workers, artisans, small landowners, small business owners, and so on, with incomes that allow them to live comfortably by Coast standards. Urban location and relative affluence within the Coast's enclave economy traditionally facilitated Creole community access to imported consumer goods, products available only to those of the highest classes in the rest of Nicaragua. Consumption of these commodities, now a part of Creole material culture and felt by them to be necessities, is further basis for Creole self-ascription to middle-class status.

18. This order is a remnant of an ideological field created by Europeans in their struggles with other Europeans, then utilized by them in the domination of the colonized; it is now used by "the strata of colonized colonizer who have taken charge of the civilizing process in . . . [postcolonial] nations" (B. Williams 1991:28).

19. This is similar to the manner in which elements of other cultural domains reinforce Creole populism, as demonstrated earlier. For more on the role of culture in the formation of Creole hegemonic political consciousness, see Gordon (1991).

20. To give but one example, the large fishing companies owned by the Somoza clique and North American capital paid Creole fishermen only a fraction of what fishermen in other areas of the Caribbean received for comparable

product. Most were never able to own any of the major means of production in fishing. Only a favored few were ever able to acquire an industrial-sized fishing boat during this period. The fishermen resented the companies and tried to play them off against each other.

7. Creole Politics and the Sandinista Revolution: Contradictions

1. For example, Rediske and Schneider (1983:15) in the introduction to their book, written in June 1982, claim that what lay behind Sandinista problems with the Creole population was "the fear of the relatively well-off Creoles of the urban petite bourgeoisie, . . . that they would lose their privileges."

2. Daniel Ortega visited Bluefields in October 1979, in the wake of disturbances that were the result of racial/cultural conflict. In the *Barricada* article describing his trip (October 21, 1979), the racial/cultural source of these conflicts was ignored. Instead, the disaffected—presumably Creoles—although the article never mentions racial/cultural identity, are described as "counterrevolutionaries." Ortega was reported as claiming that "these cowards and traitors of the Left and the Right attempt to confuse our people, saying that the Revolution is being betrayed." He also spoke of "the bourgeois 'who sell out their country' of the rich, who were ready to hand over our country to foreign forces and who for a few cents would pawn our territory." This position fits well with the Mestizo representations of Creoles popular at the time and discussed in chapter 5.

Yet another example of the conflation of Creole identity and interests with those of Anglo imperialism is the description of the group in the first academic Sandinista treatment published in 1981 by CIERA (Centro de Investigación y Estudios de la Reforma Agraria—Center for the Investigation and Study of the Agrarian Reform): "These Creole groups . . . penetrated by Protestant religion . . . and in part adapted to British culture; formed the structure or the power base that . . . guaranteed British first and then North American neocolonialism. The culture, language and religion were plainly identified with the Anglo-Saxons" (CIERA 1981:28).

3. In late 1984 the revolutionary government publicly recognized the racial-cultural demands of Costeños and expressed the need to respect their right to autonomy for the first time. This ultimately led to the creation of two autonomous regions on the Atlantic Coast in the late 1980's. I address the subject of Creole/Sandinista tensions in a series of working papers. Some of these were published, generally a year or two after their completion and circulation in Nicaragua (Gordon 1984, 1985, 1987).

4. The narrative contained in this section is based on numerous and extensive interviews with Bluefields Creoles and Mestizos for and against the Revolution, as well as with persons from the Pacific who participated in all or some of the events recorded. Co-workers in CIDCA's Bluefields office (most notably Ray Hooker and Alicia Slate) and I conducted these interviews over four years: 1983–1987. Materials from a series of interviews I conducted in 1991 are utilized as well. This recounting is also based on my eight years (1982–1990) of participant observation in the town and surrounding villages.

5. Almost 80 percent of those Creoles interviewed in an opinion survey taken by CIDCA in 1984 claimed that before the Triumph they saw the necessity for

such a change. In our survey, nearly 90 percent of the Creoles sampled claimed to have expected good things for themselves and their families as a result of the Triumph of the Revolution, and almost 80 percent remembered feeling positive about the future at the time (Gordon 1987).

6. Letter to Comandante Raúl from Guillermo Aragón, Simón Manzanares, and Dennis Ingram, Bluefields, August 8, 1979.

7. *Ibid.*

8. There are conflicting accounts about whether the attack instigated by Kalalú on the *palacio* occurred on the same day as the demonstration or not. There are also indications that the *cuartel* attacked a commando of Mestizos in Barrio Teodor Martínez as well (Carlos Castro, personal communication).

9. Institutional power was skewed in other ways as well. Through 1989, when I stopped calculating such things, there had never been any Miskitu in a position of institutional leadership. Similarly, women had held 17 percent of these leadership positions before the Triumph in 1978; by 1989 this figure had fallen to 9 percent.

10. The heavy-handed Sandinista strategy for dealing with the *Manifestación* seemed to them so successful that they attempted to utilize it again in dealing with the Miskitu unrest that began in early 1981. The results were disastrous. The tactic precipitated a major armed Miskitu rebellion.

11. In the aftermath of the *Manifestación*, they were formed into the "Troubleshooters." The group was set up to work in the Creole barrios and initiate a process of reconciliation between the community and the Sandinistas. Initially popular among a certain sector of the young Creole adult male population because of its social activities, the group's membership rapidly dwindled when the FSLN demanded that members engage in military activities in support of the Revolution.

12. Field notes, April 1987. Jenelee Hodgson remembers the following interchange with MISURASATA leader Steadman Fagoth: "[He said] 'Black people must go back to Africa.' We going Africa. You going Germany. We don't belong here? You don't belong here neither. Get out! . . . The same rights you have because your grandparents are Miskitu mixed with Germany. We are black mixed with Rama, so if anybody going, you going, too. Let's get out!" (interview, 1995).

13. I believe that I coined this phrase in the mid-1980's; however, it was utilized frequently by Creoles and others in analyses of Creole disaffection with the Revolution. Freeland (1988:45) cites Comandante Lumberto Campbell as its source. At this point I am not sure if I actually used it first or picked it up in conversation.

14. Imagine my surprise when, walking through the reception room at the Regional Government House in Bluefields, I was treated to the sight of a group of friends and fellow workers, all with reasonably prestigious positions in the local government, sporting torn and soiled clothing and nursing black eyes, swollen fists, scraped knees, and assorted other cuts and bruises. They were fresh from engaging in a street fight with the anti-SMP youth.

15. This is probably overly optimistic. The Sandinistas did try to do something similar to what I have here suggested by founding MISURASATA jointly with the Miskitu. While recognition of the Miskitu's racially and culturally based

aspirations and demands delayed the onset of conflicts between them and the Sandinistas, they nevertheless eventually broke out. In the Creole case, the nationalist and separatist ideas embedded in Creole populism and the pro-U.S., anticommunist ideas of Anglo ideology would probably make any long-term incorporation of the bulk of the Creole community into the revolutionary process problematic, no matter what posture the FSLN had taken toward them. Subsequent to the era treated in this book, the revolutionary government granted modified political and economic autonomy to the Atlantic Coast. This might have mollified Creoles during the period when populism was the organizing frame for Creole politics. By the time it happened, however, Anglo ideology held sway and, while some Creoles, most significantly, those leaders of OPROCO and SICC who had remained in the country, were favorably disposed toward it, most maintained a relentlessly negative posture toward the revolutionary process.

Acronyms

- AES—Asociación de Estudiantes Secundarias (Association of High School Students)
- ALPROMISU—Alianza para el Progreso de los Pueblos Miskitos y Sumos (Alliance for the Progress of the Miskitu and Sumu Peoples)
- APSP—African Peoples Socialist Party
- ATEPCA—Asociación de Trabajadores, Estudiantes y Profesionales de la Costa Atlántica (Association of Workers, Students, and Professionals of the Atlantic Coast)
- CASIM—Comité de Acción Social de la Iglesia Morava (Moravian Church Committee for Social Action)
- CDC—Comité de Defensa Civil (Civil Defense Committee)
- CDS—Comités de Defensa Sandinista (Sandinista Defense Committees)
- CEPAD—Centro Evangélico por Asistencia y Desarrollo (Evangelical Center for Aid and Development)
- CIDCA—Centro de Investigación y Documentación de la Costa Atlántica (Center for Atlantic Coast Research and Documentation)
- CIERA—Centro de Investigación y Estudios de la Reforma Agraria (Center for the Investigation and Study of the Agrarian Reform)
- DRI—Dirección de Relaciones Internacionales (International Relations Board)
- EEBI—Escuela de Entrenamiento Básico de la Infantería (Infantry Basic Training School)
- ENALUF—Empresa Nacional de Luz y Fuerza (National Light and Power Company)
- EPS—Ejército Popular Sandinista (Popular Sandinista Army)
- FDN—Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense (Nicaraguan Democratic Force)
- FER—Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (Student Revolutionary Front)
- FSLN—Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front)
- INFONAC—Instituto de Fomento Nacional (National Development Institute)
- INNICA—Instituto Nicaragüense de la Costa Atlántica (Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast Institute)
- INPESCA—Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pesca (Nicaraguan Fishing Institute)
- MISURASATA—Miskitu, Sumu, Rama y Sandinista Asla Takanka (Miskitu, Sumu, Rama, and Sandinista Working Together)

- OPROCO—Organización Progresista Costeña (Progressive Costeña Organization)
 PLN—Partido Liberal Nacionalista (Nationalist Liberal Party)
 POI—Policía de Orden Interna (Internal Order Police)
 SICC—Southern Indigenous Creole Community
 SMP—Servicio Militar Patriótico (Patriotic Military Service)
 UCCOD—United Committee for Community Development
 UDEL—Unión Democrática para la Liberación (Democratic Union for Liberation)
 UNIA—Universal Negro Improvement Association
 UNO—Unión Nacional Opositora (United National Opposition).

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