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The West India Committee Circular



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Leading articles

The Situation in Haiti

The political situation in Haiti continues to be unstable following the murder of President Moïse and the earthquake last year.

An assassination attempt was made on the Haitian Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, at an event to mark Haiti's independence at a church in the Haitian city of Gonaïves on Sunday 2nd January this year. One person was killed and two others were injured in the gunfight between the armed attackers and the security forces.

Recently, Mario Antonio Palacios, a former Columbian Military Officer has been charged in the U.S.A. with President Moïse's death. Palacios was arrested in Miami after he was expelled from Jamaica.

It is alleged that the plot was initiated as an idea to kidnap the President, which evolved into a plot to kill him. Many of the other suspects in the case are also from Columbia, as well as a group of Haitian-Americans.

There are reports that suspect Joseph Felix

Badio and Prime Minister Henry are 'good friends' and have been in contact since the assassination.

Haitian officials have told the *New York Times* that Mr. Henry would be a suspect in the inquiry if he were not the acting Head of Government and indeed there are reports that Mr. Henry has interfered with the progress of the investigation. Former Haitian senator John Joel Joseph, and his wife and two children, were arrested in Jamaica. Mr Joseph has been accused of supplying weapons to the assassins and planning meetings for the plot.

Haiti's notorious gangs have stepped into the breach caused by the chaos and some now estimate that they control almost half the country. The kidnapping rate in Haiti has also increased, with the gangs funding their activities through ransom money. Members of the Haitian community in the USA are reported as putting money aside in case it is needed to ransom family members in Haiti itself.

A Haitian Pastor, Lochard Rémy, has recently been kidnapped, and his captors are asking for more than US\$2 million for his release. It is believed that after losing their homes in recent months to gangs warring over turf, more than 20,000 Haitians are currently forced to live in shelters with poor hygiene, not taking into account the current pandemic.

More than 17,000 Haitians have been deported from America, with some blaming the US government for worsening the situation by returning the people to a country where support networks have been destroyed. Corruption in the country remains rife, and it continues to be the most corrupt nation in the Caribbean, and one of the most corrupt in the world.

On 21st January a virtual meeting was hosted by Canada between ministers from 19 countries, including the UK and the USA and many partners in the Caribbean, as well as representatives from the UN, CARICOM and other international organisations, that called on the different sides in Haiti to work together for the future of the country. The partners also resolved to improve the security situation, including providing greater support for the Haitian National Police. \$39 million in aid has also been pledged for the country.

It is still unclear when the elections promised by Prime Minister Henry will be held, although he has said that they will occur before the summer. On 7th February 2022, President Moïse's term was due to have expired, although critics of the former President said that it should have, in fact, ended a year earlier. However, Prime Minister Henry has still ruled out an election before that date, although it is widely agreed by Haitian and international observers that an election cannot be held in the current security situation.

In addition to the damage caused by last year's earthquake, torrential rains began on 29th January and lasted some 36 hours, resulting in considerable flooding, primarily in the north of the country, with over 2,500 families being forced to flee their homes.

Notes of Interest

Protests have continued in Guadeloupe about the legal requirement for all health workers to be vaccinated against Covid-19. In one instance, the university hospital's administration building was surrounded by protestors. The police had to intervene and rescue the hospital's managing director and his two deputies, who were assaulted by the protestors. On Monday 24th January, police were attacked by protestors throwing stones as the former tried to clear

blockades at Riviere-des-Peres. An 8pm to 5am curfew was brought into effect in the French territory on January 10th and revised to 11pm to 5am on 25th February.

Barbados held a snap election on the 19th January, its first since becoming a republic at the end of November last year. Prime Minister Mia Mottley framed the election as an opportunity to decide who would take the nation forward under its new form of government, saying it was an opportunity to "*recalibrate as a people behind one Government and one leader*". The Barbados Labour Party won all 30 seats in the House of Assembly, the second consecutive time it has done so, and Mia Mottley remains Prime Minister.

Following a successful trial between May and November last year, the Bank of Jamaica plans to launch its digital currency in the first quarter of 2022. 230 million Jamaican Dollars of digital currency will be issued. Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) receive full support from governmental authorities, whilst governments around the world have attempted to legislate against Cryptocurrencies.

A cruise ship was diverted to the Bahamas to avoid the vessel being seized by US Marshalls when it entered American waters. A warrant for the Crystal Cruises vessel was issued by a Miami judge due to unpaid fuel bills, worth over US\$4.6 million; the company has suspended all sailings following a declaration of bankruptcy by parent company Genting Hong Kong. The *Crystal Symphony* left Miami on January 8th this year for a two-week Caribbean cruise and was due back in South Florida on January 22nd. The ship was diverted to Bimini, the Bahamian island closest to the USA. It was joined by its sister ship, the *Crystal Serenity*, on 31st January. Both vessels were arrested on 4th February.

England played the West Indies in a five-match T20 series on 23rd, 24th, 26th, 29th and 30th January, in Barbados. In the first match, England suffered their heaviest ever T20 defeat, with the West Indies winning by 9 wickets.

The second, however, saw England triumph by one run, having dominated for most of the match and seeing off a resurgent West Indies in the final over. The West Indies won the third match, with England drawing level again after a brilliant performance from acting Captain Moeen Ali, striking 63 runs from 28 balls. However, the West Indies won the final match and the series.

1: England 103 (19.4 overs): Holder 4-7, Jordan 28

West Indies 104-1 (17.1 overs): King 52*
West Indies won by 9 wickets

2: England 171-8 (20 overs): Roy 45 (31), Moeen 31 (24)

West Indies 170-8 (20 overs): Hosein 44* (16), Moeen 3-24
England won by 1 run

3: West Indies 224-5 (20 overs): Powell 107 (53), Pooran 70 (43)

England 204-9 (20 overs): Banton 73 (39), Salt 57 (24); Shepherd 3-59
West Indies won 20 runs; lead series 2-1

4: England 193-6 (20 overs): Moeen 63 (28), Roy 52 (42); Holder 3-44

West Indies 159-5 (20 overs): Mayers 40 (23), Holder 36 (24); Moeen 2-28
England won by 34 runs; series level at 2-2

5: West Indies 179-4 (20 overs): Pollard 41* (25), Rashid 2-17

England 162 all out (19.5 overs): Vince 55 (35), Holder 5-27

West Indies won by 17 runs, won series 3-2

Dominica has started building a wall that will cover almost half of its 244-mile border with neighbouring Haiti. The intended purpose of the wall is to hamper irregular migration and smuggling of weapons, drugs and goods, with the hope that this will impede organised crime in both nations.

Caricom has issued a statement saying that it, “*strongly condemns the military attacks and invasion of Ukraine by The Russian Federation and calls for the immediate and complete withdrawal of the military presence and cessation of any further actions that may intensify the current perilous situation in that country.*”

Caricom also criticised the Russian Federation’s recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the eastern Ukraine as separate states, saying it is “*violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.*”

In Cuba, traditionally a strong Russian ally, President Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed “*solidarity with the Russian Federation in the face of the imposition of sanctions and the expansion of NATO towards its borders.*”, but has not publicly endorsed the Russian incursion.

The West India Committee Report

In March, Mrs. Blondel Cluff and Mr. David Wells will visit Antigua, at the invitation of the Mill Reef Club, to deliver a series of lectures on the history of the West India Committee and its recent work.

Caribbean Cookery

Banana Cake

Ingredients

2/3 cup butter or margarine

2 1/2 cups Self-Raising flour
1 2/3 cups sugar
1 1/4 cups mashed ripe bananas (approximately
3 bananas)
2/3 cup natural yogurt
2 eggs
2/3 cup mixed chopped nuts
1 level teaspoon baking powder

Method

Preheat oven to 175C.
Grease a 25cm. square, deep baking tin.
Cream butter and sugar together.
Add beaten eggs.
Add flour, bananas, and yogurt. Mix well.
Fold in chopped mixed nuts.
Pour into greased pan.
Bake for 30 - 35 minutes. Test by inserting
toothpick – if it is clean, the cake is done.
When cool, prepare the topping.



Topping

Mix icing sugar and desiccated coconut with a little cold water or rum to make a spreadable paste to cover the top of the cake. Leave to harden.

100 Years ago

In January 1922, the West India Committee wrote to the Imperial Shipping Committee to

express that a proposed system of shipping rebates was unnecessary.

A census had been carried out in Dominica, which was noted to be difficult due to a high level of illiteracy amongst the general population. The island's population stood at 37,059, an increase of 3,196 in the preceding decade.

At the advice of the West India Committee, the Government appointed an Inter-departmental committee to examine the question of income tax in the UK and its colonies and the absence of uniformity of legislation between them all. The Committee was invited to give evidence at the Committee on the 26th January 1922.

A paper in Port of Spain, Trinidad was found to be lifting copy from the West India Committee Circular, with no more acknowledgement than 'W.I.C.C.'.

The British Government decided to sign a treaty with the West Indies guaranteeing the existing rate of preference for ten years.

The sugar industry was suffering with the price of sugar not meeting the cost of production, but experts were hopeful at the beginning of February 1922 that the worst of the situation was now behind them.

The Right Rev. Edward Hudson D.D., Bishop of Antigua, was elected Archbishop of the West Indies, succeeding Dr. Parry.

Colonel Hall Grant Pringle D.S.O., R.F.A., was appointed Inspector of the West Indian Local Forces and Officer commanding troops in Jamaica, succeeding Colonel G.G. Sandeman Carey C.B., C.M.G.

From the Library

1908 Handbook of the Cayman Islands

In the early 20th century, several British Caribbean islands produced handbooks, or at least colonial reports, which outlined the status of the colony, containing useful information on its history and economy.

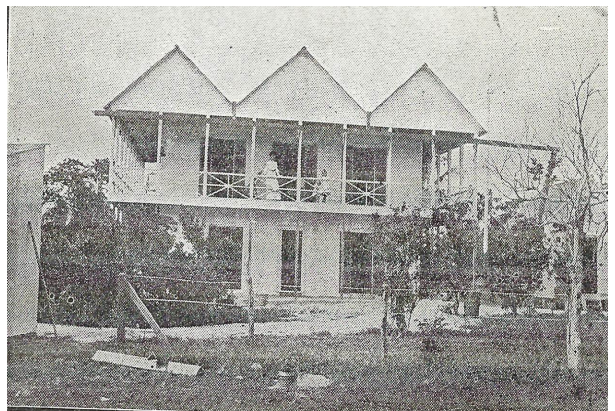
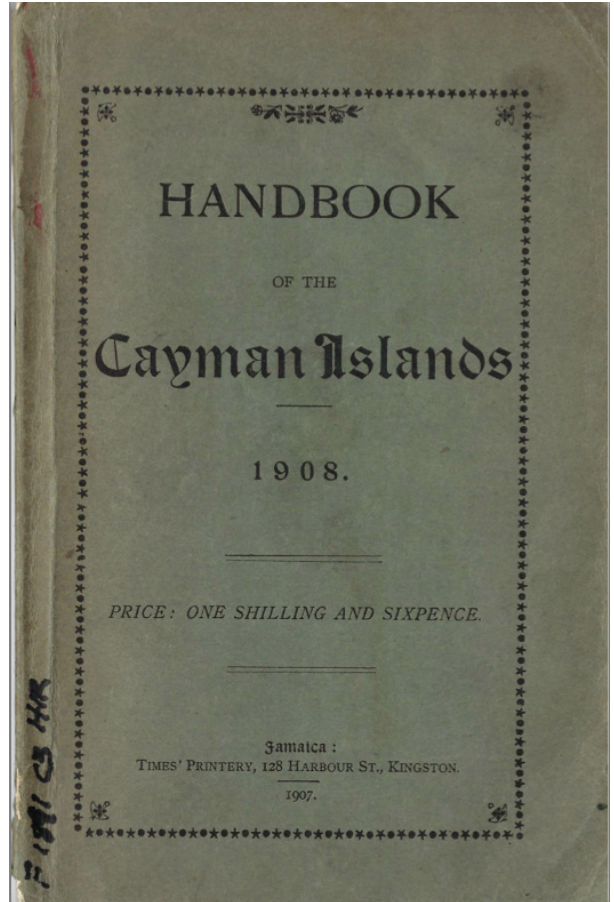
In 1907, George Stephenson Shirt Hirst, Commissioner of the Cayman Islands, decided to produce such a handbook so as to better advertise the Cayman Islands to the outside world, as they were, at the time, quite an isolated location, distant from the major shipping lanes. He followed it up with another addition the following year, a copy of which is now part of the West India Committee Collection and is [available to view](#) through our online archive.

Sources for studying Caymanian history are quite rare, and the 1908 handbook provides a snapshot of the Cayman Islands at that point in time, making it an invaluable resource.

It includes a list of the contemporary Government Officers of the Cayman Islands, in addition to other important Government figures throughout the British Empire. The Cayman legislature of the early 20th Century and the administration of the islands is explained. It also includes a brief history of the islands, not all of which is now believed to be accurate, and information about the origins of some of the most prominent Caymanian families and how they came to reside in the islands.

It also cites statistics about the islands' climate and the flora and fauna, as well as information about the various industries on the islands, including shipping and the Caymanian turtle trade, which in past centuries was vital to the Caymanian way of life. Photos feature in the handbook, including those of buildings, such as

the former Government House, now vanished in the great modernisation that Cayman saw in the second half of the 20th century.



Government House, Grand Cayman c.1908

THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE

The West India Committee is a UK registered charity that works to improve the welfare of the people of the Caribbean and the societies in which they live and work, both domestically and globally. Please complete this form by hand and post it to The West India Committee, Suite 53, 4 Whitehall Court, Westminster, London, SW1A 2EL.

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