

do, and it rarely passed off without disturbance and sometimes blood-shed.

The Carnival, a not less riotous festival by which the lower classes of the Roman Catholic population prepare themselves for the approach of Lent was last year restricted by the Government; torch-light processions and other abuses connected with it were in some measure put down but not without force three persons being shot down in Princetown by the police, as the crowd instead of dispersing, continued throwing stones and bottles while the riot act was being read.

It was considered equally desirable to regulate the *ta'zia* procession more especially as a petition had been sent in to the Governor about two years ago protesting against it as a vain and useless ceremony and an insult to the Mohammedan religion. This petition purported to be from "the Mohammedans of Trinidad and was signed by about 300 of them including some of their most influential men.

The Government therefore issued regulations in no way interfering with religious ceremonial rules, but processions on the high roads were restricted within certain limits and forbidden to enter the towns, torches and sticks were not to be carried and Creoles were strictly prohibited from taking any part in the processions. The regulations were printed in the Hindustani language, and carefully circulated, and great pains were taken by planters and others to see that they were fully understood by the East Indian people and to impress upon them the consequences of resistance so lately illustrated by the events of the carnival. Large numbers seemed to be altogether indifferent, but in various quarters threatening language caused anxiety which was greatly increased by lawless and riotous conduct on several estates, the laborers striking work, and proceeding to Port of Spain for redress, armed with hoes and cutlasses.

Very shortly before Hossee day such a procession invaded the Immigration Office, and when the police came with warrants to arrest the ring leaders (a driver had been seriously wounded on the Estate) it could only be done at the point of the bayonet. On an estate two miles from us they formed a plot to beat the manager and when he escaped, attacked his house with stones, demolished a carriage, and some furniture and assaulted a lady and gentleman.

All this contributed to the anxiety with which the Government and the quiet part of our population waited for Hossee day. Some even feared a general rising

of East Indians against Europeans; the great question was "will they attempt to enter San Fernando as usual? All, or nearly all, the planters and many others were armed and had arms in the houses; many ladies and children left their homes on the previous day. A ship-of-war was stationed at San Fernando and a party of marines landed; volunteers went into barracks, and the soldiers, I believe only 75 in all, were stationed here and there, while the police force was greatly strengthened.

Torch light processions came out on the high road in various quarters. At one point the police captured the *ta'zia* and dispersed the crowd with the bayonet, elsewhere they had it their own way as the armed force was quite too small to control so wide a district of country. The great object was to prevent the Coolies from entering San Fernando town.

About noon on Hossee day it became known that they were assembling and would probably advance on the town; about three o'clock they came on to one of the entrances, two or three thousand strong; remonstrance was of no avail; they would not go back; the riot act was read amid blows and yells, the crowd still pressing on, threatening to overwhelm the single row of police drawn up across the road, with a double row of military behind. When within about 20 yards of the police they were ordered to fire; ten men fell and the rest scattered, not, however, until a second volley had been fired.

Soon after the scene was re-enacted at another entrance to the town. The Coolies advanced in nearly the same numbers. Several gentlemen as well as some of their own countrymen met them and warning them of what had happened entreated them to turn back. It had no effect. "We can only die one time," Let them shoot" and suchlike expressions were used. A blow was aimed at the magistrate while reading the riot act. At about 25 paces the police fired, the first and second *tadja*s fell and six men were killed. The crowd did not scatter; some still urged to go on; the Inspector Commandant of Police called out that if they did so he would fire again. After that they dispersed gradually.

Over eighty were wounded, four of whom afterwards died. An inquest was held; the Coroner's verdict was that "these Coolies came to their deaths from wounds inflicted by the police who were acting under the order of the magistrate during the disturbance which took place at San Fernando on the 30th of October,"