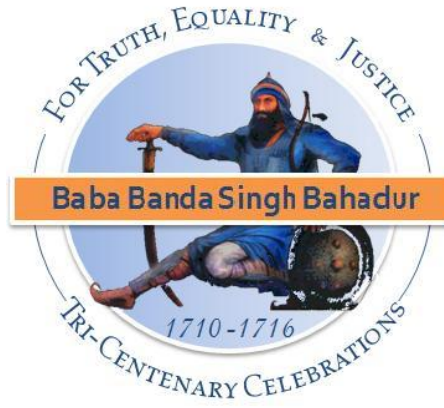


ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ
ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ



Sikh Education Council, UK

27 Old Gloucester Street,
London,
WC1N 3XX

☎07990-797-936

✉ banda@thesikhway.com

www.thesikhway.com

****PRESS RELEASE****

Seminar on the Abolition of Slavery and the Sikh Republic in Bristol

On Saturday 27th June, the Wills Memorial Building in Bristol was the venue for the first in a series of seminars hosted by the Sikh Education Council as part of the 'Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Project'. Over 100 people travelled from across the country to hear speakers Richard Reddie, Madge Dresser, Palbinder Singh and Kerry McCarthy MP contrast the abolition of slavery in the UK with the concepts of Truth, Equality and Justice in the 18th Century Khalsa Republic. The seminars are just one part of the project which is celebrating the tri-centenary of the establishment of the Khalsa Republic by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in The Punjab.

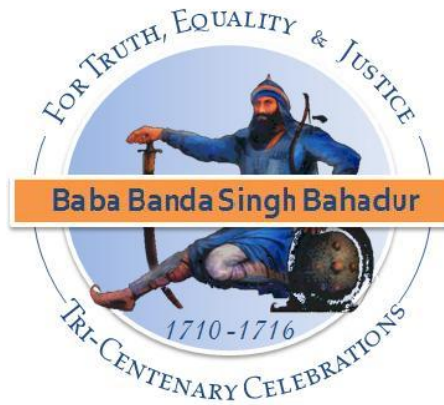
All four speakers kept the audience enthralled with their knowledge of how slavery was tackled in both Bristol and the United Kingdom as a whole, whilst contrasting it to the end of feudalism in The Punjab in 1710. Dr Pargat Singh, Chairman of the Sikh Education Council, commented that, *"The speakers had undertaken a detailed research and were able to contemporise the subject so that the seminar was not a simple history lesson. The questions that were posed at the culmination of the seminar to the panel of speakers were highly indicative that the audience had been fully engaged by the topic and as we found during the refreshment breaks, they have also been inspired to further their own studies in this area."*

The 'Banda Singh Bahadur Project' continues until 2016 and details of the next seminar in this series, to take place in London, are due to be announced shortly. The project aims to enhance understanding in both educational circles and among the general population of the events that took place from 1710 to 1716 in The Punjab. The Sikh Education Council is looking to re-visit studies and academic work of Banda Singh as a personality, battles of that era and the socio-economic policies that were put into place in the Punjab at that time. To this end, appropriate scholars and researchers are being selected to produce academic work that will bring the story of the 1st Khalsa Republic into the 21st century. Several books and related work are planned for publishing, pertaining to these very issues, where the Punjab of Banda Singh and the Khalsa is examined in the context of other nations in the World.

Date: 29.06.09

****ENDS****

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For more information contact:

Harwinder Singh
Press Officer – Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Project
Sikh Education Council
Tel: 07870 138616
Email: banda@thesikhway.com

About the Sikh Education Council:

Established since the early 1980's, the Sikh Education Council UK (SEC) is devoted to enhancing the human spirit for the benefit of mankind through education of The Sikh Way.

The 'Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Project' is co-ordinated by a team of Sikh volunteers from a range of professional working backgrounds who are concentrating on esoteric Sikh teachings from the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh history working for the betterment of humankind. The team aim to commemorate key milestones in Sikh history by organising high-profile events to educate and empower people through The Sikh Way.

Throughout the current 7 year project, the Sikh Education Council will be analysing various aspects of the 1st Khalsa Republic in relation to similar episodes across the Globe from recent history. The Bristol Slavery Seminar has been the first such event in what promises to be a fascinating series visiting major cities across the United Kingdom.

About the Speakers:

Richard Reddie a religious commentator and Project Director for Churches in England, is a published author and writer. He is a respected authority on the abolition of slavery and the impact that it had on African society, the British Empire and the west in general.

Madge Dresser a Reader in History at the University of West England in Bristol, is a published author and contributor to numerous documentaries. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, her most recent research is on the impact of slavery.

Palbinder Singh of the Sikh Education Council, is a researcher on the Khalsa Republics and author of 'Nankonianism.' Mr Singh spoke on the legacy of Banda Singh.

Kerry McCarthy is the MP for Bristol East and a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs. She addressed the seminar about something close to her heart, campaigning for social equality and justice.

Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury was unable to attend due to her tireless work abroad fighting for equality and human rights. She is the author of; 'This Immoral Trade: Slavery in the 21st Century' and 'West, Islam & Islamism: Is Ideological Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?'