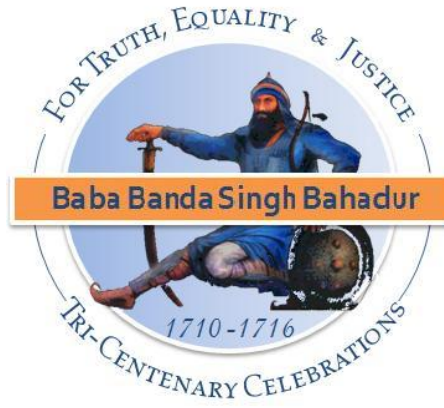


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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

**The Khalsa liberation of Punjab is commemorated in the House of Lords**

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May, Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury entertained the Sikh Education Council (SEC) to dinner in the House of Lords as part of the SEC's 'Baba Banda Singh Bahadur project'. Over 90 invited guests attended the evening's proceedings including scholars of Sikh studies; researchers and curators from public institutions; Punjabi associates and authors; and, volunteers and supporters of the SEC charity. The event was held to celebrate the tercentenary of the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Khalsa Republic by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in The Punjab.

Short speeches were given reflecting on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary by Richard Noake of York St John University, Manjit Singh Gill QC of No.5 chambers, Dr Pargat Singh, and the gracious host, Baroness Caroline Cox. Dr Pargat Singh, Chairperson of the Sikh Education Council, commented, *"It is most fitting that we are celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Khalsa Republic's establishment within the historical institution that is the Houses of Parliament, for it has delivered the same sense of freedom and impetus to countless men and women of this great country that we call home today, as Banda Singh Bahadur and the Khalsa achieved in the Punjab three centuries ago."*

The evening event was personally funded and organised by the dedicated project team so as not to utilise the SEC's valuable resources and finance. It was felt that the tercentenary should be marked in this way to honour the magnitude of what was achieved; this was a victory for freedom not only for those in The Punjab, but across South Asia and beyond.

The 'Banda Singh Bahadur Project' continues until 2016 and details of upcoming events can be found at [www.TheSikhWay.com](http://www.TheSikhWay.com). The project aims to enhance understanding in both academic 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 academic work of both Banda Singh and the socio-economic policies that were put into place in the Punjab during that time. To this end, appropriate scholars and researchers have been supported to produce work that will bring the story of the 1<sup>st</sup> Khalsa Republic into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Date: 24.5.2010**

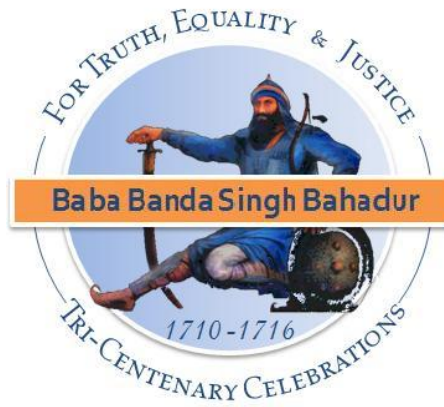
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**About the Sikh Education Council:**

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 SEC 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 eight year project, the SEC will be analysing various aspects of the 1<sup>st</sup> Khalsa Republic in relation to similar episodes across the Globe from recent history. To date, a seminar examining the abolition of slavery has been held at the Wills Memorial building in Bristol, and has been followed by a seminar examining the constitutional and legal perspectives at the Cabinet War Rooms in London. These have been the first such events in what promise to be a fascinating series amongst other aspects of this project.

**About the Speakers:**

Richard Noake is head of Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University. He has carried out research into Sikh diaspora experiences and is currently teaching Sikh Dharma, Hindu Dharma and Theology through Film amongst other subject titles.

Manjit Singh Gill QC, a leading human rights and immigration lawyer at No.5 Chambers, is both widely respected and prominent in legal circles. He has fought numerous test cases pertaining to immigration and human rights and is the editor of 'Immigration and Nationality Law Reports'. He is one of the most widely recognised practising Sikhs in the UK.

Dr Pargat Singh is chairperson of the Sikh Education Council, and an avid researcher into Sikh history and ideology. He has written extensively for Sikh journals and publications and is academic group leader of mathematics at London Metropolitan University.

Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury is a tireless campaigner for equality and human rights across the globe. She is the author of; 'This Immoral Trade: Slavery in the 21st Century' and 'West, Islam & Islamism: Is Ideological Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?'

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