

Shaheed Baba Gurbachan Singh Manochahal

On the 26th January 1986 a Sarbat Khalsa or national gathering of Sikhs was called at the Akal Takht, Amritsar, to respond to the desecration of the same by the Indian government in 1984, which the local Punjab police tried to prevent by blocking and barricading all the roads leading to Darbar Sahib. A five member Panthic Committee was established to oversee the affairs of the Sikh Nation at this most difficult time and Baba Gurbachan Singh Manochahal was chosen as one of the five. He, along with two other of its members, Bhai Gurdev Singh Usmanwala and Giani Arur Singh would all later die for the Khalistan cause at the hands of the Indian security forces in fake encounters, after being tortured to death.



On the 29th April 1986 the Panthic Committee declared that the Sikhs would struggle for the establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh state of Khalistan. The government sent in the army resulting in hundreds of arrests including that of the acting Jathedar of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib Bhai Gurdev Singh Kaonke, who was later also tortured to death. The Panthic Committee elected Baba Manochahal to replace Bhai Koanke as Jathedar, a role he fulfilled more than once.

Despite, or perhaps because he was the most outstanding of the military commanders of the Sikh resistance, he notably strongly opposed the boycotting of state elections in February 1992 by other leaders, particularly the moderates, which resulted in an illegitimate government under the control of Delhi, which unleashed a genocidal assault on the Sikhs of the Punjab:

“The election boycott is going to have a deadly effect on us. It’s going to throw the Sikh Movement decades behind. Just watch, those people who today consider it an honour to invite us into their houses will not even give us food when we ask them for it, nor provide shelter when we knock. We’re going to be slaughtered, even our moderate leaders are going to be thrown in prison and the entire struggle will be setback decades. We’re going to boycott the elections and then we’re going to see the big pillars of our movement drop, one by one.”

This genocide has all but been admitted by the perpetrators in blazon recent autobiographies published by former Director Generals of the Punjab Police and high ranking police officers such as KPS Gill, Julio Ribeiro, Izhar Alam, Sumedh Saini and others, who still believe they will not have to answer for it.