



E-ISSN: 2664-603X
P-ISSN: 2664-6021
IJPSG 2023; 5(1): 337-339
www.journalofpoliticalscience.com
Received: 07-01-2023
Accepted: 16-02-2023

Wasim Rahman Bhat
Ph.D. Research Scholar, C.A.S
Department of History,
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India

Plough as a Symbol of Identity: Poetic eulogy of Kashmir's Flag

Wasim Rahman Bhat

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2023.v5.i1e.239>

Abstract

Since the flags of the many nations and countries act as representation of those entities, they serve a crucial purpose in bringing people together and defining their identity in relation to one another. The flag of Kashmir was designed in 1939 when the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference changed its nomenclature to All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The flag had a white plough drawn in the middle of it, with a red background. It was chosen to symbolise the hard labour of the peasants of Kashmir which constituted the bulk of the population of the State. Plough being an agricultural tool, peasants had a deep attachment with it. The poets of the time tried to harness this sentimental attachment and began to eulogise the flag and plough. The present paper is an attempt to expound the poetic eulogy of Kashmir's flag, which helped greatly in identifying the flag with the hopes and aspirations of the common people.

Keywords: Flag, Kashmir, peasants, plough, poets

Introduction

The manifestation and depiction of nationalist sentiments take many different symbolic forms. The flag is one of the symbols used to signify different countries. The visual and symbolic representation of a nation is its flag. The colours, patterns, proportions, and designs of each flag are frequently related to the political development of the nation, embodying heraldic codes and frequently representing deeply held beliefs, historical ideas, and goals. A flag may inspire patriotism and national pride, yet when such a powerful symbol is tarnished, it can be quite offensive^[1].

The origin of the flag of Kashmir is rooted in the Freedom Movement of Kashmir against the Dogra rule. The Treaty of Amritsar, which the British East India Company and the Dogra Gulab Singh signed on March 16, 1846, established the groundwork for Dogra dominion over Kashmir. On account of this payment, Dogra rulers claimed themselves as sole masters of Kashmir, and "behaved as conquerors of Kashmir and treated the people as a purchased community"^[2]. It put largely populated Muslim state under heavy oppression.

Early in the 20th century, political consciousness began to blossom among Muslims of Kashmir. An organised uprising against the tyrannical regime was now becoming more and more necessary, which indurated the foundation of the Muslim Conference on October 17, 1932. In 1939, the Muslim Conference's name was changed to National Conference in attempt to secularise its goals and objectives. This conference, led by Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah and others, was crucial in steering the freedom struggle in the proper path.

The party's flag was also adopted when the Muslim Conference's name was changed to National Conference on June 10–11, 1939 AD. The flag had a white plough drawn in the middle of it and was red in colour. Pandit Prem Nath Dhar designed it. The red background and plough were chosen to represent the struggle of the workers and peasants^[3]. The meeting that discussed over the choice of flag came to the consensus that the flag should instead reflect the hard work of the millions of people living in Kashmir rather than its picturesque geography^[4].

Corresponding Author:
Wasim Rahman Bhat
Ph.D. Research Scholar, C.A.S
Department of History,
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India

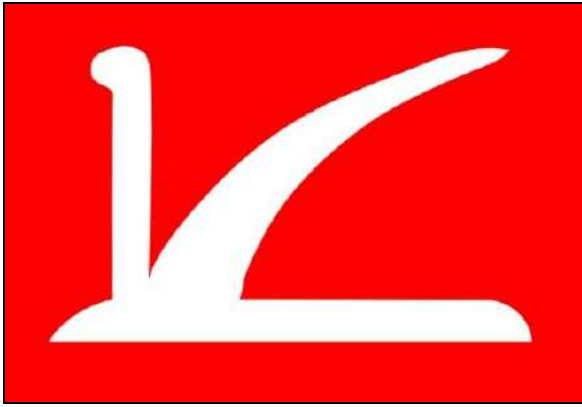


Fig 1: Flag of All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (1939-1952)

As National Conference was the leading organisation that fought for the people against Dogra despotism, its flag started to be revered as the people's identity in the 1940s and was referred to as 'the symbol of freedom fight'. The plough came to be viewed as a 'proud identity' around which Kashmir, the motherland, and the political fight of the Kashmiris were somaticized and territorialized. Kashmiri's regional nationalism and patriotism started to intertwine around it, which is effectively depicted in the regional poetic literature of the times.

Poetic Eulogy of Flag

Shortly after the flag was adopted, the National Conference's general secretary, Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi, wrote the first poem in its celebration. This poem makes a clear attempt to connect Kashmiri sentiments and ambitions with the flag. As the flag of the oppressed people, it served as a symbolic importance. Some of the lines from the poem are:

لہرا اے کشمیر کے جھنڈے طفل و جوان و پیر کے جھنڈے
 بازوئے بے شمشیر کے جھنڈے۔ بل والے دلگیر کے جھنڈے۔۔۔
 تُو بے ہماری آنکھ کا تارا۔ مظلوموں کے دل کا سہارا
 رنگ تیرا ہے لال و لارا۔ بل بے جس پر پیارا پیارا
 بر سو لہرا، بردم لہرا۔ تابہ قیامت پیہم لہرا
 لہرا اے کشمیر کے جھنڈے۔^[5]

“Let this flag of Kashmir unfurled, the flag of our people, of old and young, Of the strong and non-violent, and of our poor peasants, whoever ploughs the land. Let it unfurl. The flag, the light of our eyes and the solace of the oppressed.

The flag, the colour of which is red and a lovely plough is on it. Let this flag be ever flying, in nook and corner, till the day of judgement, let it fly.”

The majority of the people was engaged in farming during the Dogra era, and the plough, a key agricultural implement, played a significant role in their daily lives. They felt a connection to it on a deep level. The National Conference's leaders capitalised on this passionate sentiment of the people, which the poets of the era lauded. In his poem 'Jande ka Geet', Abdul Satar Asse depicted the flag as a representation of the people's hopes and aspirations. In addition to praising the plough and flag, the poem explicitly stated that those who oppose it (flag) are the enemies of the land.

آلہ ہاتھ وول جھنڈہ کیا شوہیان کاشنر بند
 بڑکن بھوی کرئ پور ارمان کاشنر بند
 تھدہ پایہ عالمس منز آسن بشان و شوکت
 غمگین دین زلن غم، تھدہ شان کاشنر بند
 بمت تہ بوش تھوت پانس اندر یہ پرچم۔۔۔
 آسن پمس دلس منز ہمہ پرچمک عداوت
 61ونہ تھاوزن بھوئے گو شیطان کاشنر بند۔

Look! How beautiful is the plough flag of Kashmiris! Truly, it would fulfil their desire.

It would raise the status of Kashmiris in the world. It would remove their sorrows.

The flag stands for courage and prudence.....

Those who keep ill-will against the flag, remember, they are the devil for us.

Dina Nath Nadim urged the Kashmiri youth in 'Narai-e-Inqlaab' to defend and uphold the honour of their motherland. The poem, which was written with genuine patriotism, instilled in the people a thirst for revolution. The young persons were instructed to keep the ploughed flag's honour high at all times.

رہ چھک کشیرہ بند جوان۔ تئن رہ چھوئی آک نشان
 وچھان رہ کن چھ درس جہان۔
 71رہ گنڈ کمر تہ تل کمند۔ ستارہ سون کر بلند۔

“You are the Youth of Kashmir, you have to raise the plough, the symbol of Kashmir.

You are the hope, you have to be ready to raise our honour and destiny.”

Mahjoor penned a lengthy poem about the plough called 'Albani', in which the plough is revered as a representation of Kashmiris in general and peasants in particular. A lot of metaphors have been used throughout the poem to illustrate the peasant's affection and predilection for this essential agricultural implement. However, the poem's most intriguing verses are those that illustrate the poet's attempt to emphasise the martyr's death in upholding the honour of the flag. Maqbool Sherwani's^[8] martyrdom is associated with the honour of the flag since he died to uphold Kashmiris' sense of pride.

ہ ہائی ہے رنگہ رنگہ یاد اسم احسان چانی۔ مارمنز سان آل
 رے کن وچہ وچہ اس چہ توشانی۔ مارمنز سان الہ ہائی ہے
 ژندن وارچ تیرکمانی سورگچ خور در دانی ہے
 میڑہ تل گامت چہ بدخواہ چانی۔ مارمنز سان الہ ہائی ہے۔۔۔
 تصویر چونی چہ قومچ نشانی۔ تی مون قومن سانی ہے۔۔۔
 رے پتہ زوچدا کور شیروانی۔ شوقہ چانہ اوس دورانی ہے
 91یاد آسی تسنز قربانی۔ مارمنز سان الہ ہائی ہے۔

“We remember your gratitude, O beautiful plough.

by our countrymen as the symbol of our land.

Your looks give us joy, O beautiful plough.

Looks like a bow of sandalwood, a fairy of the sky,

Your enemies go down into dust, O beautiful plough.

You have been accepted Sherwani gave his life for you, whose sacrifice we remember. O beautiful plough^[10].”

Therefore, plough developed as a symbol of identity and as a result, a resolution was passed by the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir on 7th June, 1952, adopting the official flag of the state, in which plough was depicted, under the provisions of the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The adopted flag was the modified

version of the old flag. It had deep red colour with three stripes representing Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh while the plough was a celebration of farming. However, with the abolition of the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in August, 2019, this flag lost its official status.

References

1. Nicole Smith. *Flags of the World*, JG Press, Somerset USA; c1995.
2. Hargopal, Khasta Pandith. *Guldasta-e-Kashmir*, p. 206 Cf. Hassnain, F.M, *Freedom Struggle in Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 201, p. 31
3. Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah. *Aatish-e-Chinar*, Ali Muhammad and Sons, Srinagar; c1986, p. 240-241.
4. Aijaz Ashraf Wani. 'The Popular Voice: Secular-Progressive Discourse in Kashmir (1932-1947)' in *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XXXIV, No.1, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi; c2007. p. 260.
5. Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi. 'Jande Ka Geet' in *Gaaye Ja Kashmir*, Quami Cultural Mukhaz Kashmir; April 1948. p. 13-14.
6. Abdul Satar Asse. Jande ka Geetn, in *Gaaye ja Kashmir*, p. 15-16.
7. Dina Nath Nadim. 'Narai-i-Inqilaab', in *Gaaye Ja Kashmir*, p. 19. See also Dina Nath Nadim, *Mai Chham Aash Paghuch*, Compiled by G.R. Hasrat Gadoo, Taj Company, Delhi; c2016. p. 49.
8. Maqbool Sherwani was a young NC member who saved Srinagar from the tribal raiders by misguided them to a wrong path. The tribal invaders later crucified him on 7th Nov, 1947.
9. Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor, 'Albani' in *Gaaye ja Kashmir*, p. 17-18.
10. The above three verses have been translated into English by A.N. Raina and rest are self-rendered, as the present form of this poem does not include these verses. See, Ghulam Ahamd Mahjoor, 'Albani', Tr.(English), A.N. Raina, in *Indian Literature*, Indian Poetry Today (January-April). 1980;23(1/2):248.