

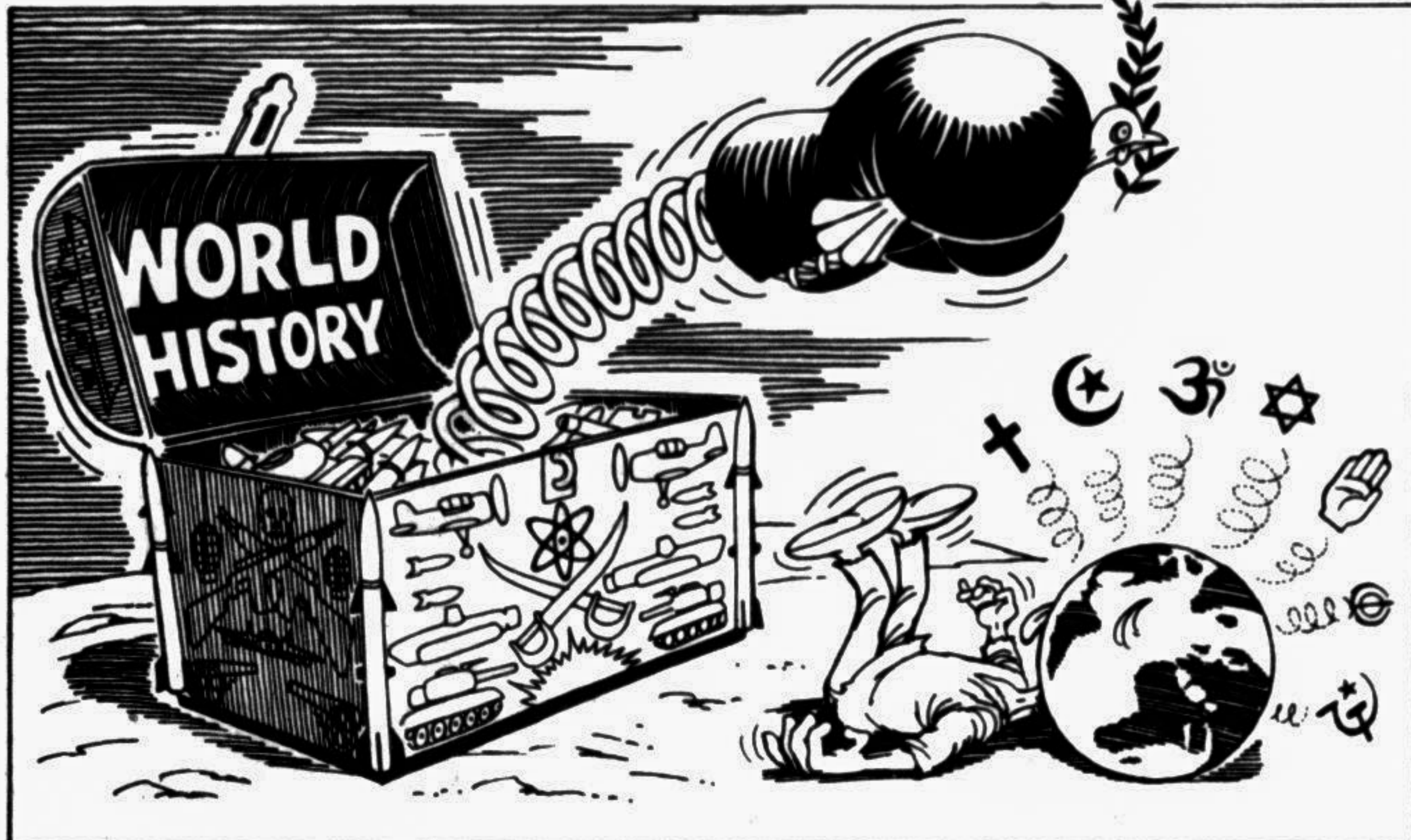
# Death Anniversaries

As humanity marks the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II this year, what must be remembered is that there are no real victors in games of death, says peace studies professor Johan Galtung.

overlooked that just a few months after one machine of genocide was dismantled in the West, another one was introduced in the East to bring about the Victory in Japan. As far as the meaning of these anniversaries is concerned — whereas today death camps are not being built officially — the nuclear age is still unfolding. The United States and other veto-holding nuclear powers continue to block the Non-Proliferation Treaty conference. It is toward the elimina-

tion of all nuclear arms that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should spur us. The anniversary of yet another occasion is also falls in 1995, the start of the Crusades 900 years ago on November 27. On that day in Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II declared war on Islam, launching the 'Holy' Crusades, which continued for nearly two centuries until 1291. The Muslims ultimately 'won' that round, the war, potentially involving 1.25 billion human being against one billion, is still going on — as anyone today can see, hear, or read. In the present 'round',

there are three Protestant or Catholic 'bombs' (United States, Britain, France); three orthodox 'bombs' (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus); one Confucian-Daoist 'bomb' (China); one Hindu (India) and three Islamic 'near-bombs' (Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan). These anniversaries should be spent mourning the stupidity of government policies on all sides that lock countries into games of death, and the gullibility of people who offer themselves as pawns in such games. Above all, these should be



The countries involved, and the world as a whole, should use the occasion for serious reflection on the blunders and stupidity that led humanity into some of its darkest hours which may well occur again. The 50th anniversary of Victory in Europe is on May 8 and that of Victory in Japan on August 15. A few days earlier, on August 6th and 9th respectively, here are the anniversaries of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Victory is Europe Day marks the end of a nightmarish war in which some 44 million people lost their lives. But it should not be

days of reflection — spurring a proliferation of dialogue like 'teach-ins' on the Vietnam war — on two themes: How could these wars have been avoided? How can we avoid future wars. If governments organise this, so much the better. But there is more hatred of war among people than among governments, and more imagination than positivism among historians. Should the United States apologise for nuclear genocide in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Definitely — but to humanity, not to Japan. The use of massive violence to counter other acts of massive violence was yet another

atrocities of that war. Our reaction to these events today is not a matter of apology and forgiveness or pardon. The problem is how to uproot and forever eliminate what Robert Jay Lifton has called 'the Genocidal Mentality,' and to do so demands deep reflection. Should Pope John Paul II apologise formally to Islam on the 27th of this month, and declare the speech of his predecessor out of order? The pope made an important start recently by stating that the use of force against

Islam to preserve the Holy Places was a mistake, and that the proper relation between peoples and religions is a respectful dialogue. While a formal apology on the part of the Pope might still be useful, what is more important is deep reflection by both sides on why the Crusades happened, what could have been done at that time and what can be done today to bring together the gentler sectors of Islam and Christianity — and then work on their more hardened brethren. — IPS Johan Galtung is Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Hawaii and European Peace University.

# The Veil Controversy



In the world of Islam, fundamentalism is still so deeply rooted that any violation of Quranic precepts immediately triggers public reaction. In fact, such is the fervor imbued by the Quran on all true blue Muslims that even administrative orders take a back seat to a rigid laws of the holy book. This was proven recently when the use of the veil became central to a protest by parents of high school girls prohibiting them from covering their heads and faces. Sometime ago, the education ministry issued a decree mandating parental approval first if a girl wished to wear the veil to school. The decree stipulated that female students must wear school uniforms 'at all times' without the usual head and face covering required of all Muslim women. That set off a lawsuit filed against the education ministry by 10 Islamic lawyers on behalf of 50 parents seeking the abrogation of the decree. The three-man administrative court under Presiding Judge Abdel Aziz Hamada said that 'regulating public freedoms can be done only by means of a law. These freedoms include personal freedom (in this case the wearing of the veil) which Art. 41 of the Constitution describes as

an inviolate natural right.' The courts further stipulated that the Ministry of Education should refrain from interfering in the sphere of public freedoms by means of issuing an administrative decree, as this is the prerogative of the legislative authority alone. The court also said that the current education law does not include any provision specifying school uniforms and does not authorize the Ministry of Education to do so. 'Consequently, the Ministry's decree amounted to an encroachment on the powers of the legislative authority,' the courts said. The influential Fatwa Committee of Al-Azhar previously denounced the decree as a violation of Islamic Shari'a, declaring it 'made disobedience to what God ordained the rule and obedience the exception.' The Ministry defended the decree as necessary, arguing that many schools had been infiltrated by Islamist teachers who force girls to cover their hair against their will.

This is a blow in face of the government, said lawyer Abdel Halim Mandour. 'We thank the Ministry of Education for pushing the people to speak out by issuing this decree. The people came out strongly against the decree and strongly in favour of the veil and Shari'a. Randa Ali, a 17-year-old secondary schoolgirl rejected the Ministry's argument that some teachers forced students to wear the veil against their will. 'When a teacher explains Islam to a student and tries to convince her to do the right thing does not mean that the teacher is forcing her to act against her will,' she said. The decree had also prohibited all primary school girls from covering their head on grounds that only women who have reached the age of puberty are required to wear the veil. 'This is true,' Randa said, 'but when you are accustomed to something in your childhood, you will stick to it once you grow older.' Han an Abdel Alim, 26, wearing a black niqab - a

loose outfit that covers the entire body with the exception of the eyes — said that her four-year-old niece wished to wear the veil. 'No one is forcing her but it is so much better that she gets used to it when she is young.' A ruling of the Supreme Constitutional Court affirming man's right to marry up to four wives has triggered an angry reaction in feminist circles, although legal experts said it only amounted to a correct interpretation of the 1985 personal status law. The court, under Judge Awad El Morr, ruled that a wife filing for divorce because her husband took a second wife has to prove to the judge that she suffered material or psychological harm as a result of the husband's action. Otherwise, she will not be eligible for divorce. The judge added that: 'Every man has the right to marry up to four wives in accordance with the clear texts of the Qur'an which permit polygamy. The wife therefore has no right to seek divorce from her husband because he remarried, even if she held certain feelings (of resentment) towards the second wife. A second marriage in itself should not be a reason for the wife to feel that she has been harmed and seek a divorced from her husband.' —Depthnews Asia

## CINEMA

### Not Without My Daughter: Perverse Propaganda?

# The Revulsion They Feel

Abdul Qayyum

YOU have to see a film called 'Not Without My Daughter' for some understanding of the revulsion that many in the Western world feel when some of us so much as mention the name of Islam. In both intensity and extent, it borders on horror. You have to see the film to grasp what they feel and to appreciate why I respond in anguish as I do. It is a true story about an American woman married to an Iranian man, and their seven year old daughter, all of whom fly to Tehran in the days of the Iran-Iraq war, against the wishes of the woman who gives in when the man vows on the Quran that all of them will return to their home in the states after a brief two week holiday. The man goes back on his pledge when exposed to the welter of conflicts in a society in turmoil, subjects his wife and daughter to a harrowing experience of bigotry and violence, till one day the two set out on an epic escape to freedom leaving behind a man to struggle on his own with the Islam to which he had returned. So stated in brief, the plot of the film may appear to some of my brothers in faith as another wily piece of propaganda deftly carved to defame Islam, another attempt at an inroad into the citadel of our faith by perverse Western Liberalism. But you have to see the film, with an open and honest mind, to appreciate why I think otherwise: compelled to question our conduct, while losing none of my faith as a Muslim by conviction. I remain saddened, however, by the yawning gap between the ideal and the reality of the faith that we profess. This cannot go on, I cry out, and fright overtakes me as I contemplate our headlong plunge into disaster. Islam won't die, but we will; some consolation for the dying man, little for the living. Please don't call this film perverse propaganda. I should know. I have been in the Ministry of Information long enough, in Pakistan at that, to have acquired some understanding of the many dimensions of both perversion and propaganda. This is a sensitive film, rigorous in its fidelity to the truth that it seeks to reflect. I saw in it no trace of a slant or exaggeration, only a stark restraint in sight, sound and dialogue adding great poignancy to a tragedy unfolding with reckless speed. The end result is devastating: a searing condemnation of what we have made of our Islam. In saying so I am making a subtle distinction which the observer outside the pale of Islam may bitterly reject, asking me to recognize the tree by the fruit it bears. Within the formal fold of Islam some may see in my assessment something of the bane of a 'Western' education, my credentials notwithstanding. But outside these two categories just mentioned, there is a vast arc of mankind anxiously wanting to know how much of the truth lies where. As a man both vexed and perplexed,

who still remains by free choice a Muslim, I have a few thoughts to share, more to clear up my own confusion through the rigours of a written analysis than to sway the opinion of another, one way or the other. That last observation brings me straight to the first of several issues. Our self scrutiny as a community must come to grips with what in my perception is an inordinate desire to preach and to sermonize. There is an irrationally high anxiety for the moral well being of the other, with the inevitable dilution of a corresponding concern for one's own self. We are physicians ready to heal others, 'not ourselves'; we see the mote in our neighbour's eye, not the beam in our own. By and large our concerns are primitive, with an all consuming focus on the visible, immediately tangible, external, aspects of the faith: prayer in congregation, fasting, ritual charity and the performance of the pilgrimage. True, these are the pillars of the faith, as designated by the Prophet himself, but must we forget that the house of Islam is a naked monstrosity when it is all pillar and no covered space, a mansion abandoned even before it is completed or a ruin decay no matter how well preserved the pillars? The point is: the pillars are only the means to the raising of an edifice, not an end in themselves, either in the life of the individual or of the community. So, narrow is our vision of prayer, we have little to show for its overflow in the rest of our lives: no discipline worth the name, no cleanliness, no concern for the one on the right or the left, no compelling sense of duty or responsibility, no awareness of the constant exposure to God, no realisation of the need for continuous self-examination and self-reformation. So narrow is our vision of fasting, we have little to show for its overflow in the rest of our lives: no self-restraint, hardihood or endurance worth the name, no waging of a war against the beast in our breast, no taming of the passions, no reorganization of the self in a new order of cleanliness, compassion and peace. So narrow is our vision of charity, it ends with the doling out of few coins or the construction of yet another mosque in a society steeped in unspeakable squalor: hunger, poverty, disease, illiteracy and ignorance, easy prey to a bewildering array of social ills. Our road to Mecca brings us back from where it started, as if the journey were never made: back to a divided community devoured by its own divisiveness.

The truth of the matter is simply this: we have reduced what are indeed the pillars of the faith into ritual observances routinely performed. The husk, the shell, the external form is passionately preserved with little reflection over the substance, the inner content and the ultimate goal of these practices in relation to the shaping of our overall character and everyday conduct. The end result is the bizarre spectacle of a land where many loudspeakers call every worshipper to pray every day and even as many respond, the crime rate multiplies, violence stalks the land, corruption deepens, disorder supplants discipline and social solidarity gives way to petty, unending strife. As we grope in the dark for a remedy, our cry for Islam zeroes in on the minutest of the appropriate apparel for women, on men wearing a beard, on children learning religious formulae and facts by rote, on sexual morality as the only concern of our ethical enterprise, on punishment as the only response to crime, on fear and compulsion as the only instruments for social reformation. Not surprisingly, we end up with the kind of horror that 'Not Without My Daughter' so poignantly portrays. Surely there is nothing in the prophetic model to even remotely suggest a reign of terror or coercion as legitimate instruments for the creation of an Islamic order. The task of shaping the community as a socio political entity was not undertaken till the hearts and minds of a substantial number of individuals had been won over, the nucleus of a community leadership clearly forged, the ground well prepared for the formal promulgation of laws and regulations relevant to the new order. The process was evolutionary, starting with the enunciation of principles and implemented by degrees over a varied period of time in relation to different laws. Even so fundamental a law as the five prescribed prayers a day did not come into effect all at once, nor indeed the annual fast or the ban on intoxicants, to quote only a few examples. Almost every law was, by and large, a successive approximation toward a social ideal, flexibility approached through honest exhortation and the creation of a public mood for ready acceptance before the expected passed into law. Once promulgated the law was rigorously enforced with divine sanction behind it and the exemplary submission to it by all in authority, followed by the public at large. Our fixation on the formal and the visible forms of piety stem, I think, from the fact they are so easy to exhort and even exhibit. Restricted to the formal plane and requiring no great expertise, these practices bestow on their public practitioners a sense of both power and achievement which they are unlikely to achieve in tackling the more concrete problems of the community, for example: the supply of clean water, garbage clearance, an efficient sewerage system; the building, maintenance and operation of hospitals and schools, roads and bridges, homes for the aged and the destitute; vocational training for the unemployed, farm and

factory management, and a host of institutions necessary for the socio-economic and cultural development of the community. It is so very easy to ignore these, to forget that they stand at par with prayer and charity in a faith which makes no distinction between the religious and the secular duties of man. We proclaim Islam's unitary vision of life; in practice, however, we perpetuate a cruel dichotomy: piety within the precincts of the mosque, a thoroughgoing impiety in all our worldly affairs as soon as we step out of it. The inviolable link is broken, Islam remains confined to the mosque surrounded by sermons; a mockery even within, because of the mockery outside. Beyond the ethical impropriety of it all, lies the equally important issue of competence. Both individuals and communities normally do what they can and conveniently ignore what they cannot. When the education and the skills necessary for the productive conduct of life remain stunted, the focus inevitably shifts to extra worldly concerns and a desire to gain in the Hereafter the well-being, the order, the decorum, the harmony and peace which we fail to establish on earth. Such an escapism, we need to bear in mind, is wholly alien to Islam in which the shaping of the Hereafter is a direct consequence of our earthly activities. The way to serenity in the Hereafter is through the creation of a serene order on earth, not by running away from either its demands or its travails. In Islam, the performance of our worldly duties call for the same measure of enthusiasm and devotion which we now erroneously reserve for a set of activities specifically perceived as religious (eg the observance of the five pillars, the Quranic recitation etc). There can't be two different levels of either obedience or application when it comes to the performance of our duties, when duty is seen as an undifferentiated command independent of any sub classification into secular and religious. Our failure to grasp this fundamental precept is clearly visible in the ease with which we violate income tax laws, traffic rules and a whole range of regulations relevant to the ordering of our lives as a civilised community. Murder, rape and kidnappings litter the land; crime and corruption pour venom into the streams that sustain public life; a mad, no holds barred rush for self and power tears apart the social fabric. With our civic life in total disarray, our homes are under siege: even the individual on the edge of the abyss in this onrush of collective chaos. The restoration of order and sanity in this environment of encircling gloom cannot be left to a wishful surrender to the self corrective forces of history. The accumulation of injustice and oppression over a prolonged period may one day trigger a revolution but there is no

# From the Earth: The Charm of Pueblo Pottery

It was at the Indian craft shop inside the Department of the Interior in Washington D.C. several years ago that I first

thin walls and a light weight. Cochiti potters primarily produced figurine pottery, believed to be the result of demand of Santa Fe traders

has acquired an increased importance. Early on in this revival, different pueblo styles were recognized and encouraged. Since the mid-1960s, emphasis is growing on individual work rather than traditional craft. Thus while there are still potters who work in traditional shape, design and material, there are a growing number of individual artists who, while drawing from the same craft tradition, imprint their individuality on their work. Increasingly, names of individual potters are being heard. The pueblos thrive on the tourist trade, selling tours,

made my acquaintance with Indian pottery. Of all the objects that I saw, nothing made a more lasting impression on me than a small, chestnut-brown "pebble," grained like wood and smooth like polished stone. The size of a paperweight, it could not have been too expensive. I looked at it, then turned to the lank-haired Indian in the shop and asked if the object was a stone. Instead of responding to my question, the Indian beckoned to the white man behind the counter. No, he told, me, it wasn't a piece of stone, but a piece of pottery. Made by hand, he said. Indians did not use a potter's wheel. He opened a book and showed me pictures. The tools were crude, they must have been the same centuries before Columbus was born. Time seemed to have stood still. The man explained how the clay was polished with a piece of smooth stone to give it that fine polish. Most of the pottery was made by women, like the woman in the picture. The clay was not bought clay, he told me. It was taken from secret, sacred places, and they prayed on it, thanked the earth for all it has given. Finally, I asked the price. Perhaps I had not read the sign right. It could not be two hundred and fifty dollars. But it was, and I turned away, with one last touch to remember how it felt. Smooth and cold and hard. I never forgot that piece of pottery that I never possessed except when I held it in my hands. And it was therefore with immense expectations that I looked forward to my trip to Albu-

quereque. I was not disappointed. Pots were everywhere, in museums and in craft shops. Gradually, they started falling into place, different pueblos — different villages and groups — being associated with different styles. Originally, pots were functional. They were meant to hold water or grain, food or seeds. They differed in size and shape as they differed in function, and they differed in the colours and designs drawn on them. Till the 1800s, pottery was an integral part of daily Pueblo life.

ferent pueblos — different villages and groups — being associated with different styles. Originally, pots were functional. They were meant to hold water or grain, food or seeds. They differed in size and shape as they differed in function, and they differed in the colours and designs drawn on them. Till the 1800s, pottery was an integral part of daily Pueblo life. Large ollas or jars served as storage containers for dried food, clothing and water. smaller ollas were used for cooking. Bowls were used for cooking and mixing bread dough. By the late 1800s pottery was being replaced by manufactured metal and ceramic. Pottery, however, did not die out as it remained of interest to collectors and museums purchasing the older pieces. Furthermore pottery-making continued, though it underwent a change as new styles were developed to sell to the non-Indian consumer. Much of the pottery being made now has been affected by both a return to prehistoric designs and shapes, as well as by new techniques such as sgraffito, or incised designs. A coma pottery consists of black-on-white work, and is marked by

ing designs into clay. Zia pottery is marked by red and black arches and designs of stylized birds and water. Zuni potters are fond of using prehistoric designs. Pueblo pots are made by the coil and scrape method. The sides of the pot are built of successive coils of clay. The joins in the coils are pinched together by fingers and the pot smoothed out with a curved-edge tool a piece of gourd or pottery shard. After the clay has been smoothed out, a water-clay mixture called slip is applied. While it is still damp, the pot is polished. Traditionally pottery was fired outdoors, though now some pottery is fired in electric kilns. With the resurgence of pride in Indian heritage, with the active support of museums such as the Museum of New Mexico and with growth of tourism, pueblo pottery

jewellery and pots. At Acoma Pueblo which I visited, the small traders on the mesa, 367 feet above the valley, all sold large and small pots. The Visitor's Centre below displayed an exhibition of One Thousand Years of Clay: Pottery, Environment and History. The museum shop sold Indian jewellery. But on the way back to Albuquerque we stopped for gasoline and next to the petrol pump, in an ugly prefabricated shed we saw what is touted as the financial hope of the Pueblos: a casino. Gambling is going to be the big money-maker. (Everyone by now, it seems has forgotten what drink did to the Indians after the European 'discovery' of America.) Will pottery stand a chance against the quick money to be generated by gambling?



An old olla or jar from new Mexico



Black-on-white bowl from southwestern Colorado

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Continued on page 12