

form anyone who cares to listen that Israel's consulate in South Africa was upgraded to full embassy status only after black Africa's change of heart in '73, implying it could be downgraded again.

Black Africa's fresh thinking on the Mideast first came into the open when the majority of its heads of state, gathered at the Monrovia conference of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) not long ago, refused to "punish" Egypt, despite Arab demands, for its separate peace with Israel. During the conference *The Express* of Liberia, the host country's only Sunday newspaper, called on African countries to resume relations with Israel without further delay. "With rapprochement now a political fact of life between Egypt and Israel," it argued, "member countries of the OAU no longer feel bound to maintain a diplomatic break with a country which can offer much in the transfer of technology to them."

Several members of Parliament in Kenya are advocating an early resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel. Zaire and Israel recently announced the resumption of trade union links, a development seen by both as a step leading to full diplomatic relations. Black Africa is thus likely to follow its own economic interests but may well achieve a great deal more. Given the political isolation of Egypt and Israel and the military impotence of all the other parties directly involved in the Mideast conflict, black Africa now stands a chance of reversing its traditional relationship with the Arab north by extending an influence over events beyond the Sahara and the Red Sea. It could use that influence to encourage a dialogue between the hostile forces and thereby broaden the peace process into a just peace for all the peoples locked in the struggle.

Thomas Land writes on world affairs from European capitals.

Quote/Unquote

How's That Again?

...The weaves are first shown in their standard forms, then lesser known and unknown techniques are developed and explained in detail. ...

--a Scribner's catalog

EXCURSUS II

ALBERT ANTREI on PAUSE AT AGINCOURT

Battles are historically ephemeral. Take Agincourt, for instance.

There is a quiet dignity about Agincourt, in Picardy, where over five hundred years ago French knighthood lost its flower in a sudden onslaught of English frost. In a land that has all too many military cemeteries, one of the bloodiest battles ever recorded was fought here on October 24, 1415. To hold his lands in France against a rising French nationalism, Henry V of England stormed ashore at Harfleur, which he took by surprise in bloody combat. Attempting then to march to Calais to establish winter quarters, Henry's 14,000 men, 85 per cent of whom were archers, were intercepted at Agincourt by a force of French knights and their men-at-arms, numbering, it is believed, close to 50,000 in all.

Playing it coolly, Henry deployed his "infantry" of pikemen and swordsmen behind sharpened stakes, driven in the ground at an angle, to discourage a French cavalry charge. He flanked these troops with 12,000 bowmen. Numerically superior and swathed in heavy armor, the French pitted romantic tradition against Henry's tactical daring, and Henry taught the flower of French chivalry their fourth hard lesson on the field of battle: that military techniques had changed. Three times before they had been taught that lesson, once by the Flemish communes at Kortrijk and twice by the English at Crécy and Poitiers.

Ten thousand French dead and their horses littered the fields and woods of Picardy on that day in 1415, near the village the French called *Azincourt*. Nearly 2,000 Englishmen died there also --some 12,000 in all on a few hectares of fertile farmland.

THERE ARE NO MAJOR HIGHWAY SIGNS along the secondary road between Abbeville and Saint-Omer today to put the traveler on notice that he is approaching a historic

site. Only slow driving and some chance sign-watching alerted me that Azincourt was a kilometer or two along a country lane. We took it, the Belgian couple and I.

On our inquiry at the local inn of the tiny village, *madame l'aubergiste* produced a memorial card in a time-browned tissue envelope from somewhere behind her bar. She told me where the shrine was located, and the memorial card she sold me for a couple of francs told me the rest. A chapel had been built on a small plot at the battle site in 1734 by the family of the late Marquis de Tramecourt, a chapel that was demolished in 1793 by revolutionaries. The ossuary, in which so many of the bones (*le charnier*) of all who had fallen at Azincourt had been interred, was infamously exhumed in 1816 (*fut odieuse-ment fouillé*) during the occupation by foreign troops following the defeat of Napoleon. A roadside crucifix (*un calvaire*) was erected to replace the chapel and holds the following inscription in French:

25 october 1415

It was here that our valiant warriors succumbed. (2 Kings 1:25) It is a godly and salutary sentiment to pray for the dead, that they might be delivered from the pain they endured for their faults. (Maccabees 12:46)

This cross was erected by Victor Marie Léonard, Marquis de Tramecourt and Madame Aline Marie Cécile de Tramecourt, his wife, to the memory of those who perished with their ancestors on that fatal day of Agincourt.

Pray for them.

The memorial card added that this roadside shrine was the only dedicated reminder of the terrible disaster that made the name of the little village known to history.

THERE IS THE SAME PEACE HERE TODAY that hovers over all old battlefields. The fury long spent, the blood long let, and English claims in France long forgotten, life around Azincourt goes on today much as it must have before that 25th day of October in 1415, complicated now only by radio, TV, and farm machinery.

Aside from her wonder that a lone American tourist, accompanied by two unconcerned Flemish companions, should find his way up a parochial lane in Picardy to pay respects to a French *calvaire*, madame showed little sentiment about it. The two Belgians were skeptical that anything significant had ever occurred at all. They were patient, but not history "buffs." They shrugged off the romantic idiosyncrasy of an American.



The French had counted their dead and those of the English and buried all the bones together in the ossuary, which was desecrated by soldiers from another land.

The English have their own view of that day in October, and in the flush of military victory over odds, the poet Michael Drayton expressed it:

Upon St. Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble Fray;
Which Fame did not delay
To England to carry.

O, when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?

One can forgive the French for allowing such an ignominious defeat to drift off the beaten path.

I left *Azincourt* as quietly as I had come. But as I departed it occurred to me that the American poet Carl Sandburg said it best for all old battlefields:

Shovel them under and let me work.
I am the grass; I cover all.

Two years, ten years, and passengers
ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

Albert Antrei, who lives in Utah, is now retired after thirty-four years as a teacher of history and French in the high schools.