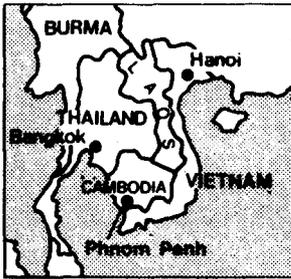

LANGUAGE

“Cambodia” or “Kampuchea”? *What’s In a Name?*—By ROGER KERSHAW



IT MAY BE a sign of rapidly changing times that a writer on Cambodia should feel bound to offer words of explanation and justification when he calls it by that name in preference to the increasingly fashionable “Kampuchea.”

Southeast Asia has an example, in Siam, of an ancient state institutionalising (in 1939) a more popular and indigenous form, *Prathet Thai* (“country of the Thais”), and enjoining the rest of the world to follow suit with appropriate linguistic modification in 1939. But the practice of the Pol Pot régime of Cambodia was in a distinct and highly xenophobic category. It directed the international community to abandon its varied, national pronunciations of the country’s existing name in favour of something closer to the Khmer pronunciation. There is a parallel in the substitution of “Sri Lanka” for “Ceylon” in 1972, to mark the foundation of a new Republic; but the divergence of the objectionable European renderings from the Sinhalese original had gone much further than ever “Cambodia”, “Cambodge” or “Kambodscha” have drifted from *Kampuchie*.

At all events, the international response to “Kampuchea” has been generally cooperative. Even the BBC has helped to propagate the new usage—not simply in reference to the government or state of Democratic Kampuchea, which Britain recognised until December 1979, but also for the country as a geographical entity and the people in it (who, with the help of an English inflexion, become “Kampuchians”).¹ In France, however, where neither Democratic Kampuchea nor its successor is officially recognised, both the *RTF* network and the

Paris press have been more conservative and stand by “*le Cambodge*.”

Let me try to explain my own linguistic conservatism in the matter.

FIRSTLY, THERE IS an element of deception in the insistence on a quasi-Khmer pronunciation. Few foreigners realise what they are being “reworded” into. It is widely supposed that the state and people of Cambodia have chosen a new name. But that assumption was not unwelcome to the Pol Pot régime, which wished to project in unambiguous terms the profoundly original nature of power and social values in the new Cambodia as from 1975, its “Year Zero”, or at least since April 1976 when Democratic Kampuchea succeeded to the popular-front government under Prince Sihanouk’s nominal leadership—his *Gouvernement Royal d’Union Nationale du Cambodge*. In accepting the new usage the world was supposed to be made aware of “the Revolution” and thus exposed to subtle suggestion about its legitimacy.

Now I do not dispute the profound revolution of power which occurred in Cambodia in 1975. In that respect I agree with the late Dr Malcolm Caldwell’s remark (*The Leveller*, December 1976) that “what is going on in Cambodia is one of the most significant portents for the future of all ‘free world’ Asian countries. . . .” But the accompanying revolution of social values and concomitant legitimacy of the régime cannot have spread far beyond the ranks of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and its Revolutionary Armed Forces,

¹ *The Times* of London has adapted itself to the “revolutionary” usage, as in:

“The Bring-and-Buy sale in London yesterday raised £10,789 for the Kampuchea appeal organized by BBC television. . . .” (*The Times*, 22 December).

But the American *International Herald Tribune* (Paris) still holds to the conventional older (and perhaps future) usage, as in:

“Former Cambodian President Lon Nol says that he has accepted an invitation from Prince Norodom Sihanouk to discuss forming a coalition to try and win back Cambodia from the current Vietnamese-backed régime. . . .” (*I.H.T.*, 19 December).

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if the extraordinary level of coercion under “Democratic Kampuchea” is anything to go by. Since the general legitimacy of the Pol Pot régime remains unproven, or even demonstrably non-existent, I prefer to avoid a usage which may have been designed in part to create a contrary impression outside the country.

Lest the point about external image-building appears pedantic, I would point to two further aspects of the case. For several years before the victory over the Khmer Republic of Lon Nol on 17 April 1975, the revolutionaries referred to their country as “Kampuchea” in any form of communication in foreign languages; and the new popular front was styled *Front Uni National du Kampuchea*, as if to bring “Kampuchea” into association with the idea of national unity. Subsequently, following victory, it was striking that some Western colleagues more sympathetic to the Pol Pot revolution were early enthusiasts for the new usage. Stephen P. Heder, in an article on “Mistranslations in Counter-Revolutionary Propaganda” in the Australian news-sheet *News from Kampuchea* (August 1977), went so far as to rebaptise the Khmer language “Kampuchean.” Again, in the course of a study of ideology and Communist international relations, “The Kampuchean-Vietnamese Conflict” (in the academic annual survey from Singapore, *Southeast Asian Affairs 1979*), Heder even applies the Pol Pot usage anachronistically to Prince Sihanouk’s régime of the 1960s.

Some may say that “Cambodia” is also sentimentally anachronistic at the present time. If that is so, I hope to enjoy the same indulgence in this respect as those on the other side of the spectrum. Besides, a case for “Cambodia” has been most ably and authoritatively argued by Prince Sihanouk in a letter written from Pyongyang to his compatriots abroad (reproduced in *Sereika*, August 1979, a monthly bulletin of pro-Sihanouk exiles in Paris). “Cambodia” and other foreign renderings imply no colonialist contempt towards the Khmers, he points out; whereas “*depuis que messieurs les Khmers rouges imposent l’appellation ‘Kampuchéa’ au monde entier, notre pauvre pays sombre dans les pires malheurs et misères de son Histoire...*” The point is well taken—though the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea might complain that it was Sihanouk who propagated the usage “*Khmers rouges*” against *their* will, both before and after he allied with them in 1970.

The truly odd aspect of the “Kampuchea” terminology is that it is not a *popular* usage among Cambodians, although in no way a neologism. *Srok Khmai* (“land of the Khmers”) is the usual term, an analogue of Malaysia’s *Tanah Melayu* (“land of the Malays”) and Thailand’s *Prathet Thai*. *Kampuchie* has overwhelmingly courtly and Brahmanistic connotations. The psychology at the

root of this “non-progressive” symbolism of the *Khmers rouges* is an important subject for speculative enquiry—to explain the whole phenomenon

Linguistic Hot Line



THE BBC was told yesterday that every member of its staff who broadcasts regularly, or is concerned with the preparation of broadcasts, should have a pamphlet giving guidance on the “correct” pronunciation and use of difficult words.

As a back-up service, the BBC should install a “hot line” to the offices of the Oxford English Dictionary—for on-the-spot advice in moments of linguistic crisis.

Dr Robert Burchfield, chief editor of the O.E.D., said he believed that the most contentious areas in ordinary pronunciation could be pinned down to perhaps 20 words which caused the public to become “exercised.”

Among them were: CONtroversy (which should NOT be conTROVersy), FORMidable (forMIDable), EXquisite (exQUISite), COMparable (comPARable), disPUTE (DISpute), PRIMarily (primARILY), KILometer (kilOMeter), ADversary (adVERSary), conTRIBUTE (CONtribute), CAPitalist (capITalist), LAMentable (lamENTable), PREFerable (preFERable), and ALLies (allIES).

He had, he said, heard four different pronunciations of “Cracow.” As for the Ayatollah Khomeini, “I have heard every conceivable change rung on that one.”

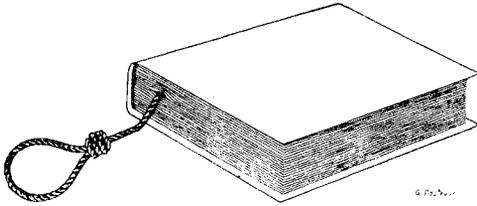
Dr Burchfield said that people should stick to their normal mode of speech, irrespective of the context.

SUCH PHRASES as “I used to paddle my tootsies when I was a kiddywink” and “Put them in an envelope and whack ‘em off to us” were cited by Dr Burchfield.

After such “softening up” phrases, Dr Burchfield had heard a Consumer Association spokesman use “quid” instead of pound and “kids” instead of children.

DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

Block that Quote!



I. "Intellectual Paces"

Washington D.C.

HE DRIVES a gold-coloured Mercedes, went to Harvard on a scholarship, is still only 29. He is a close friend of such active "McGovernites" as Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine, and is a true child of the 'sixties, nurtured on television and schooled in the life of the counterculture.

Because he had just been through the intense sociopolitical reading programme that led President Carter to reassess and reinvigorate his Administration through his July 1979 speech on the "crisis of spirit" in America, Caddell put me through the same intellectual paces he had gone through himself to reach his conclusions. . . .

PLAYBOY: *Is the rest of the White House ready for this fight?*

CADDELL: Yes, everything is highly energized all of a sudden. As Mark Twain once remarked, there is nothing like the prospect of hanging at dawn to concentrate your mind the evening before. . . .

PLAYBOY: *Twain's analogy to a hanging may be apt, because it seems to be coming a bit late for Carter. . . .*

"Interview: Pat Caddell, a candid conversation with President Carter's young pollster-adviser"
PLAYBOY (February 1980)

"Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Letter to Boswell* (1777), in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 273

"And my poor fool is hang'd. . . ."

"Hang up philosophy! . . ."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*,
pp. 454, 478

"There ain't no way to find out why a snorer can't hear himself snore."

MARK TWAIN, *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894)

2. As We Then Called It

London

TWO STROKES left President Woodrow Wilson virtually crippled. Government fell increasingly into the hands of his wife and "kitchen cabinet", as we would now call it.

ROGER BERTHOUD, in *The Times*
(London, 22 February 1980)

"KITCHEN CABINET": the coterie of unofficial advisers to President Andrew Jackson (1828-1836).

Dictionary of American History (1978)

3. Crystal Clarity Corrupted

Paris

THERE IS the customary playful Arrabal, mixing the sexes, surrealistic contours, but the message is crystal clear. Arrabal here echoes Lord Bryce's "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

THOMAS QUINN CURTISS,
in the *International Herald Tribune*
(21 February 1980)

"POWER tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

SIR J. E. E. DALBERG,
First Baron Acton
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*
(2nd ed., p. 1)

4. Green Discovery

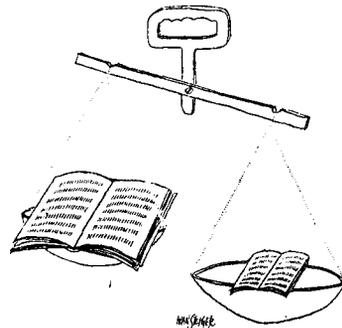
FOR MARY MCCARTHY, every short story is a little act of discovery, and she quotes Hegel: "The tree of life is greener than the tree of thought. . . ." It is for the green fragrance of discovery that her essays will be remembered.

OLIVIA MANNING, in the *Sunday Telegraph*
(24 February 1980)

"Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie/Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum."

"All theory, dear friend, is grey, but the golden tree of actual life springs ever green."

J. W. VON GOETHE, *Faust* (1808),
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 223



merely by reference to the transfer of formal legitimacy from a "Royal Government" in 1976 would surely not go far enough. I will not hazard any line of my own but merely point out, and acknowledge, the no less surprising fact that the pro-Viet Nam successor régime to Pol Pot's "Democratic Kampuchea", established by Vietnamese arms in January 1979, styles itself "the People's Republic of Kampuchea." A more complete change of terminology might have communicated a clearer political sense of transformation. That, however, may be precisely the point: the neo-revolutionary régime does not wish to hint at a "Restoration." The People's Republic of Kampuchea is a Marxist-Leninist régime, manned for the most part by the ex-*Khmers rouges* cadres. Its choice of National Day, 17 April (the anniversary of the overthrow of Lon Nol), duplicates and confirms the older practice of "Democratic Kampuchea."

IN ANY EVENT, the world may choose at the present time—and in the main does choose—between two "Kampucheas": that is to say, between two Communist régimes which have adopted the designation "Kampuchea" in their international relations. Pol Pot's régime (though not his guerrilla force) is at an end inside Cambodia but still lives on as an international diplomatic fiction for reasons of Chinese support and Great Power rivalries. Heng Samrin's new régime exists in Cambodia but suffers inferior standing abroad because of its establishment by force and desperate dependence on Viet Nam and the Soviet Union. Neither régime, then, enjoys much legitimate substance. For that matter, the

people of Cambodia themselves (at three million or less and still declining) are no longer a substantial nation—with a disproportionate reduction of the male population and an even more disproportionate disappearance of administratively and technically competent personnel brought about by warfare casualties and deliberate extermination under the *Khmers rouges*. In the words of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, "after the next few months of starvation and slaughter we may have to search outside Kampuchea to find Kampucheans" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 October 1979).

Such a possibility must be allowed, considering the nature of Viet Nam's new "pacification campaign" against the Pol Pot remnants. That campaign has included a draconian programme of food-denial fit to swell the flood of famine-stricken refugees into Thailand to one million. But if, I suggest, almost the only Cambodians in the world are eventually to be found *outside* the jurisdiction of either of the two "Kampucheas", then we have one reason less for referring to them as "Kampucheans."

When do régimes acquire a moral right to redesignate their people in international nomenclature? Opinions differ. But the case for redesignation is particularly unconvincing if a régime's lack of substance is mainly due to the absence of a population for it to control; i.e. when the régime has been expelled from its own territory, or the people have taken to flight or are dead. What a disjunction between political terminology and social reality!

When all things are so impermanent, surely a well-tryed, politically neutral term like "Cambodia" can still hold its appeal and usefulness.

Love Situation Language



THE *Lee Marvin* case has highlighted the lack of an adequate word in the English language to describe the growing number of people living together without the benefit of matrimony.

The word "mistress", which has been used frequently in reports of the Los Angeles trial, is dismissed as old-fashioned and sexist by women's libbers. Another reporters' favourite, "lover", is not strictly accurate. People do not have to live together to be lovers.

"Live-in girlfriend" scores on accuracy but loses points for being unwieldy, which is the same problem with the suggested "spouse-equivalent."

"Chamber-mate" and "chamber-fellow" only show how desperate the search for the word can become. "Consort" would be good, but it can also apply to marrieds.

The California Welfare Department un-

romantically calls a cohabiting unmarried either a "URAW" (for unrelated adult woman), or a "URAM" (for a man).

The forthcoming American census will use the almost unpronounceable "POSSLQ" (meaning person of the opposite sex sharing living quarters).

Capital initials also persist in a book of advice for would-be Michelle Marvins, called "The LTR Book", which stands for "Living Together Relationship."

Wits have come up with "HUS" (meaning: husband without a band), but unfortunately the opposite of this is HUSSY. "Sin-in-law" is totally unfavoured.

The best suggestion so far to describe a person "in bedlock but not wedlock" is "Co-Vivant." But even this sounds like "post-nasal drip."

There is, however, the perfect word for the recompense Miss Marvin is seeking from her six years of living with Marvin. It is known around the corridors of the court as "Palimony."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

TRAVEL

A Day On the Jebel

By Suzanne St Albans



THERE IS a clanking of rifles as the tribesmen who have hitched a lift in the Civil Aid helicopter scramble out (no nonsense about ladies first in these parts) and promptly disappear into a cloud of red dust, flying twigs and dead leaves whipped up by the beating of the great pulsating blades.

We have reached our first port of call on the Qara mountain range, on the easternmost part of the Arabian peninsula, overlooking the Indian Ocean. "Ophir" of the Bible, the land of frankincense, is now Dhofar, a province of the Sultanate of Oman; and the Qara mountain range,

shaped like a vast boomerang, forms a kind of barrier, sealing off the coastal plain from the interior desert, and creating a micro-climate unique in Arabia. The vacuum caused by hot air rising out of the scorching Nejd desert behind the Qara range sucks in the moisture-bearing winds which blow off the East coast of Africa. When these swirling, soggy mists hit the Jebel, they condense and fall as a continuous drizzle lasting for the whole of the monsoon season, from June to September.

During this period, visibility is reduced to nil, as a permanent fog envelops the plain of Salalah, shrouding the uplands in heaving rolling clouds. These raging East African winds churn up the Indian Ocean, which can be heard pounding away invisibly on the beach like rumbling thunder. When the monsoon clouds disperse, a marvellous change

has taken place, and the whole province is covered with lush, tender, emerald-green grass. Likewise, the usual bleak desert aspect of the Jebel has also turned to a green carpet spreading beneath the fig trees, the camel thorn, and other scrub of the hills. Deep down in the mountain wadis, entire ravines become luxuriant oases with gushing brooks, and pools and waterfalls, exuberant tropical vegetation, a tangle of soaring lianas and hanging orchids, fleshy ferns, and thick spongy mosses. Among all this, humming birds hover beside huge purple banana flowers, dragonflies dart over the pools, fat yellow wasps swing from side to side like wound-up watch springs, and clouds of butterflies arise from the water's edge at the slightest disturbance.

This little paradise was a battlefield for eleven long and tedious years, during which time many British soldiers lost their lives in a war which hardly anybody has ever heard about—the Dhofar War. This started three months after the then Mr Harold Wilson had decided to withdraw the British Army from Aden. The vacuum was immediately filled by Chinese, then Russian terrorists, and became a fertile anarchists' breeding ground. Oil, of course, was the villain of the piece. The large rich wells of Iran were the objective. The plan was to disaffect the Jebel tribes, and set them up against the Sultan's Armed Forces, destroy morale, wreck the economy, then swarm through the country right up to the Straits of Hormuz, at the entrance of the Gulf, then punch their way through the soft, unsuspecting underbelly of Iran.

The long and dreary war has now been over for more than a year, and to mark its end, the last National Day Parade was held in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar. As a celebration of victory, it was a great triumph, unspoilt by any acts of terrorism, a sure sign that all that side of the affair was well and truly over.

AS SOON AS the guerrillas had surrendered in one area of the Jebel, the government of Oman moved in at once with supplies and medical aid. The idea, in order to discourage the rebels for good and all, was to install an official centre with all possible