

THEY'RE USING OUR LINGO

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In 1964 I wrote in Pageant that "English (more than half of which is composed of foreign words) has reached the point where other languages are beginning to borrow rather extensively from us". Since then, I have watched with interest as our mongrel tongue has not only continued to borrow from others as usual -- we have recently acquired discothèque from the French, just as we long ago got woodchuck from the Indians -- but has increasingly received from foreign-language speakers around the globe the compliment of imitation, sometimes without acknowledgement. The Greeks who gave us xylophone and more recently bazouki music are now talking in sophisticated circles of our texas (taxes) and mini skirts. Every new gimmick (originally a German coinage) of our mad, mod younger generation is copied, in language as well as dress, around the world. Every tiener (teen-ager) and his broeder knows not only of the provos (from the French provocateurs) in Holland but of the Mersey Sound of the Beatles' rock and roll (rakendrol in Hungary, pok-eng-pol in Bulgaria). The Japanese who gave us kamikaze and karate have copied not only our naifu and forku way of eating, but have also found our fork lock (folk rock) as attractive as the Russians found our dzhaz, which is hunky-dory with us.

Our smorgasbord of a language has given the Spanish beisbol (with one of my favorite words: jonrón, home run) and the Finns pesäpollo. In exchange for the ukulele and pineapples, we have given the Hawaiians statehood, the American kala (dollar), and peni (pen), penikala (pencil), and at last ballpoint, as their primitive Polynesian language has been replaced by the world's lingua franca of today, which is American English. With only twelve letters in their alphabet, the Hawaiians at first spelled the months Ianuali, Pepeluai, Malaki, Apelila, Mei, Iune, Iulas, Aukake, Kemakemapa, Okakopa, Nowemapa and Kekemapa, but at last pretty much gave up their own language, though not often their unusual pronunciation of English, so that it is difficult to know whether the single word one hears -- say, Sabati for Sabbath -- is in English or a Polynesian word borrowed from English. Similarly, a Japanese might convince you he was reading an English grocery list were he to reel off beikon,

bata, aisukurimu, chokoretto and bisuketto. As we borrowed stevedore from the Spanish estivador (one who stows carga, in Spanish carga), so the Puerto Ricans of New York are looking for a place to parquear (to park the car), the Argentinians are drinking lleneral (ginger ale), and the Madrilenos are sitting down in English fashion to their afternoon te y ponque (tea and pound cake). In the Finnish kahvilaari and the Hungarian kavehaz, in the British pally (from the French palais de dance) or the French nightclub, American music and Liverpoolian lyrics are teaching English (at least in part, and of a sort) to millions.

A list of 50 foreign borrowings of English words (represented phonetically in Roman characters where necessary) is presented below. The reader is invited to identify (1) the original English word, and (2) the language which has borrowed it. Answers are given in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

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| 1. stiff-ticket | 26. cora |
| 2. biftek | 27. gemlingshus |
| 3. colcrem | 28. makinchprc |
| 4. strajkar | 29. redingote |
| 5. blajnpigg | 30. guafay |
| 6. aperashen | 31. herkot |
| 7. lof-letter | 32. nailon |
| 8. te lu fong | 33. ajskrym |
| 9. telewizja | 34. peipi |
| 10. njeuspapler | 35. o kontri |
| 11. peda | 36. kawboju filmas |
| 12. salang | 37. kaddam |
| 13. pikunikku | 38. sityholly |
| 14. bara i minne | 39. k'a fei |
| 15. blaekbor | 40. vilda vastern |
| 16. atomi pommi | 41. muvlingpikceris |
| 17. smoking | 42. p'u-lo-lleh-t'a-li-ya |
| 18. bondes | 43. saiduak |
| 19. puddi gud | 44. guachiman |
| 20. engin | 45. gescreent |
| 21. dipoidh | 46. risurin |
| 22. Geancach | 47. schiacchenze |
| 23. racchettiere | 48. calamazo |
| 24. fanfurria | 49. vacouomme-clineaur |
| 25. mpasketmpall | 50. enugh |