

# LETTERS

## Budding euphemisms

Vicky Hutchings' timely piece on the euphemisms that advertisers use to avoid mentioning bodily functions ("Backchat", *NSS*, 15 July) omitted a prime culprit: the cotton buds advert that talks about "those important little places". Is there no end to this madness?

Tim Beecham  
London SW4

## Nuclear knowledge

In your issue of 24 June, Paul Rogers ("Carry on regardless") stated: "The British government's view [is] that a limited nuclear war can be fought and won."

This is the first I have heard of it. Evidence, please?

Michael Howard  
Oriol College  
Oxford

## Animals and Aids

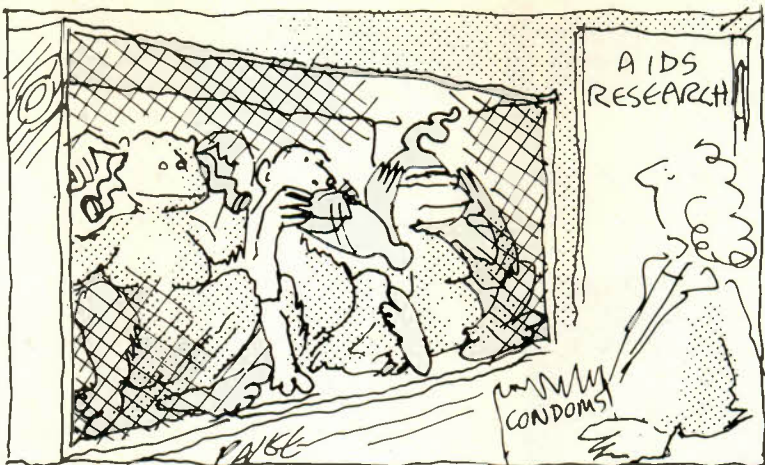
The revelations of Duncan Campbell about sharp practice by drug companies over Aids ("The amazing Aids scam", *NSS*, 24 June) come as no surprise to those of us whose interest and concern extend to laboratory animals.

Understanding of the causes and spread of Aids has progressed with remarkable speed, yet virtually all the research involved has been carried out without using laboratory animals. Cell cultures, microscopy, gene technology, clinical studies, epidemiology and computer modelling have proved excellent methods of research.

Yet for the development of vaccines and drugs, scientists tell us that an animal "model" of human Aids is essential. Since chimpanzees are among the very few animals in whose bloodstream the human Aids virus survives, American pro-vivisection lobbies are hoping to lift the ban on trapping and export of wild chimps. Some believe the survival of chimpanzees in the wild is thus seriously threatened.

Researchers are already beginning to find that potential vaccines and drugs for Aids which have been tested in animals are proving ineffective or damaging in people.

When will resources be directed to humane research methods so that



relevant knowledge can be gained without causing animals to die in their hundreds of thousands?

Gill Langley  
Hitchin  
Herts

## Silencing theatre

Albert Hunt's timely piece on new theatre writing under Thatcher ("Avoiding making a drama out of a crisis", *NSS*, 1 July) made some telling points.

To put it bluntly, it is impossible to write a "public" play set in a living room (or any domestic setting) for a small number of performers (Trevor Griffiths's *The Party* is the one significant exception). As Howard Brenton once said: "You can't write a play that describes social action with under ten actors"—unless one goes in for the near-manic doubling of a smaller cast.

But unless a new writer is a genius or very lucky (preferably both), she or he is not likely to get a large scale, large cast play produced until she or he has "served an apprenticeship" of small plays for small spaces (the inevitable round of studio productions), by which time there is either a "bottom drawer" full of unproduced "big" plays, or a writer incapable of writing them.

As for satire: why on earth should the most appropriate response to nine destructive years of Thatcherism be laughter? Is this the only response a writer can evoke from an audience?

Seeing *Serious Money* last year (before the election), while enjoyable, gave me the feeling of being shat on by a play that could not take either its subject or its audience seriously—its West End transfer was a very bitter irony.

My very great fear is that a whole generation of writers including perhaps myself—will not be allowed the time, money and space to develop the necessary theatrical skills to use the theatre as an entertaining and critical large public forum—a silencing of dissent every bit as effective as an axed grant or a new Official Secrets Act. I hope I'm wrong.

Derrick Cameron  
Temba Theatre Company

## CND protests

The fact that CND representatives at the European Nuclear Disarmament (END) convention in Lund did not sign a protest on behalf of the Hungarian minority and others in Transylvania threatened by the devastating measures of social engineering planned by the Romanian government ("Frontlines", *NSS*, 8 July) is indeed of interest to your readers, many of whom must be CND members.

But the suggestion that we did not sign because of fear of the Communist backlash inside CND, and fear of causing offence to the official peace committees of the WTO countries must have come as a surprise to them.

We did not sign because CND has a policy on human rights only so far as this affects "peace rights" (in other words, the right to organise independently of the state, and the right to conscientious objection) and, as a peace movement, we find this adequate and reasonable.

We have regularly protested in support of independent peace activists in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, GDR and CSSR. In the past, this has indeed proved "offensive" to the peace committees