

Dear Observer,

I don't think there has been a single human society which did not use some form of relaxant or stimulant. There are several such in our society and they provide the theme to this Directive. Some of them are harmful and others (like most things) only bad in excess. Some are addictive, by which I mean that body and brain can come to depend upon their presence for 'normal' functioning.

There are two parts to this Directive. Please do read the whole thing through first.

### **PART I: RELAXANTS AND STIMULANTS**

#### COFFEE & TEA

Would you please keep a check over two or three days of how many cups of coffee and/or tea you drink in a day?

If you drink only tea or coffee, or if you don't drink either, please tell us if there are any special reasons for your preference. Do you use decaffeinated coffee?

Among the cups that you drink in the course of the day, are there any that are more important to your well-being than others? Could you (would you!) possibly go without these for just one day and report your reactions?

#### SMOKING

Would smokers please say what they smoke, ie pipes, cigarettes, cigar. Specify which brand and average consumption per day.

In what circumstances are you likely to smoke more or to smoke less? Do you have regular smoking occasions, eg with a drink of any sort, after meals, making 'phone calls? What other (ie irregular) circumstances call for a smoke?

Do you try to cut down or stop smoking, occasionally, or quite often? If so, do you use any particular technique or aid, and what is your most severe withdrawal symptom?

How do you react to the current social pressures against the smoker?

If you have stopped smoking, please tell us what your average consumption used to be. How long is it since you gave up?

#### ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

If you never drink alcohol, would you please say why. Have you ever suffered social embarrassment on this account? Which of the effects of 'normal social drinking' strike you most?

At the time of writing this do you have any alcohol at all in the house? If you have, what is it and in what quantity? Is this usual? If you don't usually keep alcohol in the house, do you sometimes buy it for

drinking at home? If you buy for special occasions only, what would these be? Where do you normally buy your alcohol?

Do you have a 'local'? Do you visit it regularly? What do you drink? Does most (or all) of your alcohol drinking take place there? What are the attractions of going to the pub? If you don't have a local, what kinds of pubs do you prefer and when do you visit them?

Do you know (without looking it up!) what the recommended maximum intakes are for men

**Please turn over**

and women? What are your views on random breathtesting for drivers?

Apart from any long-term effects on health, what is your limit (or limits if you vary your consumption)? Have you ever drunk to excess - briefly or for an extended period? Was there a reason for it?

Do you ever give up alcohol for a period? Have you ever been required to give it up?

What are the physical and emotional effects of giving it up? At such times (or indeed generally) are you aware of pressure from other people encouraging you to drink?

#### FOOD

Do you think you are ever compulsive about eating? If you feel you are, why do think this is so? Have you ever tried to lose or gain weight? Can you write about this experience for us?

Are there certain foods (or edibles) that are so irresistible that you don't keep them at home?

#### DRUGS

Women's Hour had an alarming feature recently on the addictive properties of prescribed anti-depressants. Has anyone experience in this area, or of any other addictions arising from medical prescription?

Do you have any views about legalising cannabis? Have you any personal experience of cannabis, cocaine or other substances of this kind?

#### SHIFTING THE SPOT LIGHT....

Would you care to write about living with other people who have had problems, minor as well as major, with any of the things mentioned so far? Can you tell us of any personal experience of drug-taking (including nicotine and glue-sniffing) among the young, even if it is no more than a report of behaviour observed in passing.

For parents: what do your own children have to say on all or any of these matters?

#### PART II

Twenty-one years ago, there was the I'M BACKING BRITAIN Campaign. I'm not saying any more about it because I'm just as interested in the fact that you know nothing about it as in any memories you may have! If you do recall it and were affected by it in any way, please tell.

(But please put your thoughts on a new piece of paper so we can separate your reply to Part II from Part I).

Apologies for the printed cards which we sent out to acknowledge the Summer Directive replies. The Archive has had an enormous upheaval during the summer while we moved to a new office (still within the University Library). Normal Service to be resumed shortly.

David Pocock

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