

The Mass-Observation Project

Autumn 2001 Directive

Part 1: Media and the public interest

This directive is about the media and your views on the coverage of issues of public interest and public concern, including - but not limited to - politics and including issues which you may feel should receive public attention, but which don't.

Looking back (particularly over the last year, but do go back further if you wish):

- What were your main sources of information on the issues you feel are of greatest importance?
This question is not just about information from the media but all sources of information including people (for example, friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, teachers) and organisations (for example, school, college, work, religious & political organisations and so on).

As usual, please remember to start your reply with a very brief mini-biography: your M-O number, (NOT name), sex, age, marital status, town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

- Should it be an important part of the media's role in society to provide such information? If you think it is, are you satisfied with the way the media perform that role?
- In your view, do you generally have available to you the information you *need* to be a full and active member of a democratic society? If not, why not? (In answering, you might like to say what being 'a full and active member of a democratic society' means to you).
- Do you feel that you and your way of life are represented in Britain's media?
- Do you think that you would have answered these questions differently ten years ago (bearing in mind, for example, the arrival of new media - digital television and the internet, - more television channels on satellite and cable, and changes in programming)?

SPECIAL TASK

Please can you select just **ONE** issue that is important to you and describe your sources of information in as much detail as possible. As you write, describe where you obtained your original information, how you get updates, whether you talk to other people about it and whether you feel the information is accurate and useful.

Part two:

Has the world changed since 11 September?

Your general observations on the impact of war

What we would like to hear are your reflections on the longer term impact of the 11 September attack. There has been a lot in the media about the impact and the forms it takes, but is this something you have observed in your everyday life, in your own behaviour and thinking? In your friends and family?

As usual, please remember to start your reply to Part 2 with a very brief mini-biography: your M-O number, (NOT name), sex, age, marital status, town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

What about in the wider world? For example, here has been some comment that the decommissioning of arms in Northern Ireland is a consequence of the world's reaction to the tragedy in the USA.

I also read recently that the number of engagements and marriages in the UK and the USA has increased. One friend told me he heard there had been "more sex" (whatever that means!) and another friend told me she's abandoned efforts to sell her house because the housing market had gone dead.

Some people have worried about travelling abroad, and there is increasing awareness of security issues not only at airports but in all public places. Have you come across similar things?

Stories, anecdotes, rumours, jokes, observations, reflections and your explanations both serious and less serious please.

Your thematic diary from 11 September

I hope that you have been able to record your immediate reactions to the attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September, and that as events have unfolded, and the US bombing of Afghanistan began, you have jotted down your views in a sort of thematic diary. Would you please send in what you have done with this reply.

If you feel able to continue to keep the diary going indefinitely, please do and you can send the next instalment in with your reply to the Spring 2002 directive.