

SPRING DIRECTIVE 1984

Dear Observer,

Here is the Spring Directive but before I get down to the details of it I have a few messages and items of information. First, very many thanks for your recruiting work. We have been put in touch with over 80 men and they will already know how grateful I am for their help. The second item of business is that postage costs for those who have not used the Business Reply stickers will be calculated in time for the Summer Directive. Thirdly, I am proud to announce that an anthology of Mass-Observation reports between 1937 and 1949 made by Dorothy Sheridan and Angus Calder, called Speak For Yourself, will be published by Cape on 15 March (price £12.50 - not our fault!). Fourthly, the BBC have not yet given us a firm date for their programme using material from the Summer Directive 1983; the provisional title and date was "Will we work tomorrow?", six programmes beginning in April. However, and this is fifthly, Television South West have made a film in the Archive which is due to go out in their region on 22 February, and they hope that it will be taken up by other networks later in the year; incidentally, the Archive is the richer by £150 for this! Finally, a couple of reminders. First please do make sure that your name is on your contributions. If you forget, it causes a terrific amount of work and, worse than that, worry until we are able to indentify you. Second, please do not use staples; they have to be taken out because they may rust in time and it is very difficult not to tear the paper when we take them out.

The theme of the Spring Directive is health services and sickness. It is one that many of you have touched on in connection with other matters, and several of you have suggested that we devote a Directive to it. The topic is an enormous one and as always you must feel free to pick and choose according to your interest and experience. For the Directive we are co-operating with some colleagues in the Science Policy Research Unit in this University, who have devised the questionnaire referred to in Section 3.

PLEASE TURN OVER

1. THE HEALTH SERVICE

(a) Has it deteriorated in recent years? What are your views of private treatment? If you do not subscribe to a private scheme, do you occasionally pay for treatment? If you don't do either, is it a question of cost or principle?

(b) What about your GP? Are you satisfied? Do you have anything to report on 'home visits', the use of locums, waiting rooms, receptionists?

(c) On prescriptions: have you been affected by prescription charges and have you experienced what is called 'over prescribing'?

(d) Have you personal experience of the effect of financial cuts? Is the money invested in organ transplants money well-spent?

(e) Hospitals: what is good, what is bad, what could be improved? If you have a local hospital, do you actively support it in any way? Can you report good or bad responses in emergencies?

(f) If you are a Health Service employee in any capacity, do you feel that the public always understands your circumstances?

2. MORE GENERAL QUESTIONS

(a) Do you have experience of 'alternative' medicine regularly or occasionally?

(b) Do you feel you are told enough about your ailments and the treatment prescribed?

(c) How do you react, if at all, to media reports on health dangers this includes everything from smoking to radioactive waste leakage, including temporary dangers, such as certain batches of tinned foods? Do you regularly avoid certain classes of foods, utensils or household materials because they endanger health?

3. Our colleagues in the Science Policy Research Unit have devised the following questionnaire relating to health, work and social relations. For the benefit of new volunteers, let me stress that the same rules governing confidentiality and the safeguarding of your privacy apply to this as to all the material that we receive.

These next sheets contain the questionnaire from our SPRU colleagues which mostly concerns your health and social activities. The first set of questions asks you a number of more general questions about aspects of your life which you may have described to Mass-Observation in the Summer 1983 Directive. You'll only need to fill in this set of questions if you didn't reply to that Directive, or if your circumstances have changed since then.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

First of all, we'd like you to tell us some general details of your life:

1. How old are you?..... (years)

2. Are you: Male Female (Tick one)

3. Do you live: Alone With Partner With Children With Parents With Others
(
(Tick as many as apply)

4. Which term best describes you?

Single Widowed Married Separated/ Divorced Living Together

5. Do you have responsibility for any young children (under 5)? YES/NO

Do you have responsibility for any older children (aged 5-15)? YES/NO

6. Which of the following terms best applies to you?

In Full Time Paid Work In Part Time Paid Work Unemployed and Signing on Unemployed but not signing on
 Retired Person Housekeeping/ Childcare Off Work Sick Student in Full Time Education Self-Employed

7. If you are, or have been, employed, what is your occupation?

If you are in full time education, what sort of course is this?

8. If you are now unemployed, how long has this been?..... (months)

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A different sort of question now. We'd like you to give us a picture of how satisfied you are with your life, then you'd tick the box on the extreme right (No. 10). If you are completely dissatisfied, then you'd tick the box in the extreme left, (No.0). Use the boxes in-between to indicate in-between feelings.

Completely dissatisfied 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Satisfied

We'd like you to tell us about your general health nowadays. To give us an overall picture, we're providing two sets of questions. Please respond to the questions by ticking one of the boxes.

First of all, we have a list of various health complaints that people sometimes have. Please tick one of the numbers on each line.

How much, if at all, have you been troubled by each problem in the past few weeks?

Questions	Not at all	A little	Quite a lot	A great deal
1. Cold or flu	1	2	3	4
2. Dizziness	1	2	3	4
3. General aches and pains	1	2	3	4
4. Hands sweating, feeling clammy	1	2	3	4
5. Headaches	1	2	3	4
6. Muscles twitching or trembling	1	2	3	4
7. Nervousness or tenseness	1	2	3	4
8. Rapid heart beat	1	2	3	4
9. Short of breath when you're exercising	1	2	3	4
10. Skin rashes	1	2	3	4
11. Upset Stomach	1	2	3	4
12. Feeling generally run down	1	2	3	4
13. Trouble getting to sleep	1	2	3	4
14. Trouble staying asleep	1	2	3	4
15. Difficulty getting up in the morning	1	2	3	4
16. Loss of appetite	1	2	3	4
17. Ill health interfering with work/activities	1	2	3	4
18. Feeling down or depressed	1	2	3	4

People describe their feelings in various ways, and we have a list of some of these below. Please tell us how far you feel each one applies to you. This time "1" (on the left) means "never" or "not at all", while "4" means "always" or "a lot".

Have you recently:	Never		Always	
19. Been able to concentrate on what you're doing?	1	2	3	4
20. Lost much sleep over worry?	1	2	3	4
21. Felt you are playing a useful role in things?	1	2	3	4
22. Felt capable of making decisions about things?	1	2	3	4
23. Felt constantly under strain?	1	2	3	4
24. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	1	2	3	4
25. Been able to enjoy your normal daily activities?	1	2	3	4

We'd like to know how you feel about your use of time and social relations. Below we provide a number of statements about these issues. Please tell us how far you agree or disagree with each statement, by ticking one of the numbers. The more strongly you disagree, the further left (towards 1) your tick should be, the more you agree, the further right (towards 7). If you neither agree nor disagree with the statement, then your tick will be in the middle (around 4).

USE OF TIME

The first eight questions ask about how busy and committed your time is.

<u>How far do you agree that:</u>	<u>Completely disagree</u> <u>Completely agree</u>						
1. My time is filled with things to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Much of the day, I can choose the way in which to carry out my tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I very rarely need to be punctual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Much of the day, I've got things to do at regular times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I usually like to plan and organise the way I spend my time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Things I have to do keep me busy most of the day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I don't really think I'm 'stretched' or learning much in my everyday life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Time often lies heavy on my hands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SOCIAL CONTACTS

This set of questions asks about your everyday social contacts. As before, the more strongly you agree with the statement, the further to the right your tick should be, and the more you disagree, the further to the left.

<u>How far do you agree that:</u>	<u>Completely disagree</u> <u>Completely agree</u>						
9. Most days I meet quite a range of people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I sometimes feel that people are looking down on me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Society in general respects people like me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I don't get to meet many people regularly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I'm more dependent on other people than I'd like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I see a lot of my friends or workmates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I have to do what other people want a lot of the time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. People often rely on me to turn up at the right time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

THE WIDER SOCIETY

This is the last set of questions using "seven point scales", with, as before, points further to the left expressing disagreement and points further to the right expressing agreement with each statement. These questions ask about your relations with the Wider society.

<u>How far do you agree that:</u>	<u>Completely disagree</u> <u>Completely agree</u>						
17. I'm doing things that somebody needs to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. How much my life turns out is mostly a matter of how much I try for what I want	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Sometimes I feel I'm on the scrap heap	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. At this time in my life I feel I'm making a positive contribution to society at large	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I'm not involved in anything that has much value for most other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I don't feel like my life is going anywhere much	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Too often, people treat me like a child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Most important things that happen to me are as much due to luck as planning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I'm often involved in activities that give my life meaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As a last part of this questionnaire, we'd like you to provide us with your own observations on the issues of health and social activity raised in the questions above.

HEALTH

Is there anything more general you'd like to tell us about your health? Did the questions miss out anything important, or would you like to say something more about them? Do you feel that your health these days is getting better, worse, or is keeping just the same?

SOCIAL CONTACTS

What about the quantity and quality of your social relationships? Do you feel that you meet too many people or too few? Is it easy to keep up friendships, and which ones are most successful?

THE WIDER SOCIETY

How far do you think people's worth is recognised by society? Do you feel that the balance between what you put in and what you get out of society is about right, or that it is tilted one way or the other?