

## SPRING DIRECTIVE 1987

Dear Observer,

You will be interested to hear that both the appeal for new Observers and the response to the Autumn Directive were very good indeed. The only unfortunate effect has been the delay in acknowledging contributions. I should explain that Ann and Judy, who process your work and pass it on to me for reading and acknowledgement, only work part-time and only during school terms, so please be patient; at the end of the directive you'll find some more notes arising out of the response to the Autumn Directive. May I also draw your attention to a very important separate item (on white paper) which has to do with copyright.

This year is our Golden Jubilee and by way of celebration, *MAY THE TWELFTH*, Mass-Observation's first book (1937) on the coronation of George VI, is being republished by Faber & Faber. Also out this year will be a reissue in the summer of *WAR FACTORY* (1943) and in the autumn a new M-0 book by Dorothy Sheridan, *M-0 AT THE MOVIES*.

Now for the Spring Directive which is in two parts: first Waste, Thrift, and Consumerism, second the government's campaign on AIDS. Please read the whole thing through before you write. Remember that what follow are guide-lines and suggestions, not questions that you must answer: feel free to explore and expand, to pick and choose, give as much detail as you can.

### **PART I: WASTE, THRIFT & CONSUMERISM**

First explore yourself, your upbringing and the rules about wasting and saving in your childhood home. How many of these have stuck with you, and have you rebelled against some?

Other people's habits of thrift or waste sometimes seem irrational, sometimes people laugh at yours. What about new habits acquired later in life; how do they come about? And what about things which we once regarded as luxuries and now take for granted?

At work, economy at one level sometimes requires apparent waste at another, and no less a demand for saving can produce false economies. What's your experience?

'Consumerism' refers, I take it, to the consumption of material goods pumped up by packaging and advertising. Not the sort of thing one likes to admit to! But we all experience the pressures, so which ones seem the strongest? On the other hand some advertisements seem to be for people with more money than sense. Comments?

Credit cards, their use, abuse and the 'Credit Card Trap' are something you might like to write about. Also 'impulse buying': regrets, no regrets, and regrets for not having succumbed.

Please turn over .....

Money and mood. In America there are now clinics for 'spendaholics' - men and women with financial difficulties because they're addicted to shopping regardless of need. Extreme cases - but how much does mood effect you either towards mild extravagance or, for that matter, towards parsimony?

Moving now into the neighbourhood would you like to comment on local waste-disposal, regular collections, bottle-banks, tips, problems surrounding the disposal of big things, the things other people throw away.

Jumble-sales and Charity Shops - the quality of the things people give, particularly clothes. Do changes in fashion have an effect here? Are jumble-sales common in your neighbourhood? If you have given to a jumble-sale or charity shop recently what did you give? Did you give it just to get rid of something or for the sake of a good cause?

## **PART II: THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST AIDS**

More than a few of you have written in on this topic already. May I ask you now to direct your attention to the campaign in the press, on television and through public meetings. If you have attended any of the latter it would be very useful if you would report on attendance, questions asked, comments heard afterwards etc. There are, in addition and inevitably, rumours and, no less inevitably 'jokes' which should be recorded. Have you noticed changes of any sort in your local circle which could be related to knowledge or fears about AIDS? Has your own behaviour been affected in any way at all?

### **IMPORTANT NOTES**

1. Please start Part II on a new piece of paper.
2. Please put your number in the top, right-hand corner of each separate sheet but NOT your name. This is an important safeguard of your privacy.
3. However, please DO put your name and address on a separate scrap of paper to help us process your contribution quickly and to check that we are using the correct address.
4. Couples: I must confess that we split you up and file each person's work separately; so please keep your writing separable and use your own individual number.
5. This calls for some tact FREEPOST is not really free and we are trying to stretch a small budget as far as it will go. So I'd be very grateful if you would try to save postage costs and send everything in together, not in separate bits. And when you use FREEPOST please don't specify 'First Class or 'Recorded Delivery' - it's not necessary and, of course, is a needless cost to us.

The Summer Directive will be sent to you in July. I hope you find this SpringDirective interesting. I look forward to hearing from you, but take your time.

David Pocock