

## SPRING DIRECTIVE 1991

There's a lot here! Take a deep breath and read it through first. Answer at your leisure. Remember - this might be the last directive.

The first part of this directive is about education - your own experiences as a young person and in your adult life, as a parent (if you are one), and your observations and views on the current situation. The second part of the directive has been prepared in collaboration with Dr Brian Street, a social anthropologist with a special interest in the practice of reading and writing in different cultures. There is a short Part III which is about the risks we take in everyday life. Professor Sandra Wallman, the Archive's new trustee, is especially interested in your answers to these questions.

Please bear in mind that these points are mainly for guidance. You should feel free to include additional points if you think it is important. And if you can't respond to a point, or you feel it isn't relevant to your situation, please say so.

### PART I: EDUCATION

#### About you

Please start by listing your own schools and colleges with dates and your age. This is NOT another request for a Self Portrait! We just want the bare bones. You don't have to provide the full names of places but it would be useful if you could indicate what kinds of institutions they were. Please include a note of any qualifications you received. Don't forget to start right at the beginning (nurseries? playgroups?) and bring it right up to date with evening classes and adult education if it applies to you. Please include apprenticeships and day release and any other training schemes you can think of. The rule is - if in doubt, include it.

If you are (or have been) employed in education - in any capacity - please say so in block capitals at the beginning of your reply. You might also like to comment at some point on how your experience within education influences your views.

#### Looking back

What do you feel you got out of your education? What would you have liked to have got out of it? Do you have any regrets? Do you feel that your education prepared you for your adult life? Do you consider your education over?

Please write as fully as you as you feel able covering, if you can, the different stages of your schooling, your relationships with teachers and other pupils/students and the attitudes of your parents and other family members to your education.

#### The value of education

In your opinion, what should education be for? Who should decide what is to be taught? And who should pay for it? How important is it compared to other priorities in the national budget?

#### Education today

What are your views on the present situation in Britain? Please comment not only on schools but on the whole spectrum of education.

Obviously this is a vast subject and you won't be able to cover everything unless you are very enthusiastic! Can I suggest that you concentrate on those themes you think are the most important and relevant. Please illustrate with your own experience and observations whenever possible. You may want to compare present with past.

Parents: please comment, if you have not already done so, on your children's education, past and present.

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PART II: THE USES OF WRITING AND READING  
(Please remember to start this part on a new sheet of paper)

This section is about your everyday uses of reading and writing and your ideas about them. The yellow form enclosed with this directive is for use as a sort of diary. The form asks about all kinds of reading and writing. Instructions on how to fill it in are on the reverse side of the form.

The following twelve questions are mainly about your writing for MassObservation, whether It's a diary, a directive reply or a special report. People who have been writing for us for a long time will probably find it easier to answer than newcomers, but I'd be grateful If everyone would have a go.

You will probably find it easier to answer if you read the questions all through first and there will be some overlap.

1. Before you start writing for M-O, do you discuss your ideas with anyone else? If you do, who are they? Do people know that you are a Mass-Observation?
2. One you've written your contribution, do you read it out to anyone, or show them what you've written? Has any ever asked you not to write about them?
3. Do you need to be in a particular sort of mood to write for M-O? If you do, please describe it?
4. When you write, do you need to be in a particular place? Do you have a special chair, table or desk? Do you write at home or at work? Do you ever write while travelling or away from home?
5. Do you need to have a particular pen or pencil or type of paper? Do you prefer to type or word-process?
6. Do you need privacy and silence to write or can you write with people and noise around you?
7. Do you get started as soon as a directive arrives or do you like to mull it over? Do you answer all in one go, or in different sessions? Do you make notes or do a draft first?
8. Have you kept copies of what you send us? Do you ever have afterthoughts?
9. What do you think you get personally out of writing for Mass-Observation? Do you think writing for M-O has changed you? In what way?
10. In your opinion what is the value of this kind of writing and of the whole project?
11. Do you do other kinds of writing apart from your M-O work? Please describe. How are they different from your M-O writing? (style, place mood etc).
12. Lastly, we have had the honour of receiving your photographs but most of you have never seen us. Can you put into words what you imagine we are like at the Mass-Observation

Archive? What do you think the Archive is like? When you write do you have a reader in mind? If so, who is it?

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PART III: TAKING RISKS  
(Please start a new page)

1. Are you a person who likes to take risks? If so, what kinds of risks?
2. What is the most risky thing you do? How do you judge the risk? And why is it worth taking?
3. Is there anything you would never dream of doing because of the risk?
4. What do you think are the greatest risks to people in everyday life at the moment?

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YOUR GULF CRISIS DIARIES

Please continue to record your reactions to the news. At the time of writing this directive, I have no way of knowing how things will develop. I suggest that you send in what you have done to date with your reply to this directive but that you continue for as long as the war continues and you feel able to write about it. Your reports have already attracted a great deal of interest. They comprise a unique, reflective, in-depth, record of how, over a period of several months, people responded to the news of the war which will be complementary to the more specific opinion polls which are being carried out all the time now. Please ensure that all your entries are dated and include your volunteer number. Many thanks.

ENDING PHASE ONE OF THE PROJECT

Please continue to send us replies, diaries, Gulf Crisis diaries, special reports as usual until the end of August 1991 when the present funding ends. We will do our best to acknowledge their receipt. If we are successful in obtaining funding soon, you will receive another directive in the Autumn. If you haven't heard from us by the end of 1991, you may have to assume that the Project is suspended. When we ran out of money before (1985-6) many of you continued to keep in touch with diaries or occasional special reports on subjects you consider important. It would be wonderful if you were able to do this but I'm afraid it would not be possible to pay your postage anymore (the FREEPOST system would cease) or acknowledge receipt. If an acknowledgement is important, you could enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard saying 'Your diary/report was safely received on..... by..... and I will send it back to you. Your contributions would be much valued and would be safely stored as always.

LABELS: as before please return them with your name and address on them and we will use them to acknowledge your contribution.
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Please return to: The Mass-Observation Archive, The Library, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QL (stamp needed) or, The Mass-Observation Archive, FREEPOST 2112, The Library, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 1ZX.

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