

Mass-Observation Project

Summer Directive 2000

Part 1: Coming to Britain

Over the past few months, there has been considerable press attention given over to the question of people seeking asylum in Britain. A number of politicians have been involved in the debate, notably William Hague and Jack Straw. In April 2000, I understand that there were 100,000 asylum-seekers waiting for their cases to be reviewed by the government.

The first part of this directive is a request for your views - and any direct experiences - on this subject.

Your direct experience - if any:

Perhaps you yourself are (or have been in the past) an asylum-seeker. Or there may be a history within your own experience and/or within your family's. Please feel free to write as much about your **personal experience** in relation to seeking asylum as you can.

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

For everyone else: please begin by describing any direct experiences you have had with asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants - whatever term you feel most appropriately fits people who are seeking sanctuary in this country for whatever reason. For example, you may be living in an area of the country where groups of asylum-seekers are being settled. Perhaps you are a teacher, social security officer or social worker involved with recently arrived families? Perhaps you are a religious leader or involved in local politics and this is an issue for you in your everyday work? Or you may be a shop-keeper or shop worker and be familiar with the voucher system.

Please say if you are involved in any **charitable or political organisations** concerned with the welfare of refugees or immigrants either in this country or abroad. It would be useful to have an account of what activities you are involved in.

Your views:

What do you think about asylum-seekers themselves? Do you make distinctions between people coming from different countries? Do you distinguish between what have been termed "economic migrants" and those seeking asylum for political reasons?

What do you feel about the government response?

Public reactions:

What do you feel about the public reactions to asylum-seekers? Do you feel that the charges made by some people that much of the negative British response is a form of racism? For example, in one newspaper article I read a member of the Refugee Council in Manchester described how two Kosovan refugees had been attacked with bricks and bottles and two Kurdish

women had been mugged by a gang of 20 to shouts of "You're not English". Yet there are also accounts of great hospitality and kindness.

Links with the past:

If you want to relate this question to similar debates from the past, please do - one MP during a recent debate in the House of Commons shouted that if Anne Frank had sought asylum in Britain, she would have been turned away. So you may want to consider the situation going back to the Second World War when Jewish people fled from fascism, or nearer to home, when rural families were asked to offer hospitality to children evacuated from the big cities to escape the bombing, please do.

Part 2: Reaching 100:

The Queen Mother's Birthday

As most of you will be aware, Mass-Observation has always taken an interest in the way people respond to royal events. In the Archive, we have day diaries for both the 1937 and the 1953 Coronations, and a set of day diaries for the wedding in 1981 of the marriage of Charles and Diana, plus folders of dreams about members of the royal family from the period of the Second World War. For more recent coverage, we have the large and much consulted collection of reactions to the death of Diana. It was the Abdication Crisis of 1936 (when Edward VIII abdicated so that he could marry the American divorcee, Mrs Simpson) which triggered the founding of Mass-Observation. This is not because the original Mass-Observers were royalist particularly, but rather they saw royal events as providing evidence for their anthropological study of British society.

So we are continuing the tradition:

Personal plans:

Have you any comments on the forthcoming plans to celebrate the 100th birthday of the Queen Mother? Are you involved in any special events yourself?

Please start a new page remembering to include another 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

Your views:

What do you think about the recent controversy over what should be televised and by whom? I understand that BBC TV is covering a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's on 11 July but that ITN is to cover events on her actual birthday which includes live broadcasts of various parades and public ceremonies and displays. Do you feel that the BBC has an important role to play on such occasions which is different from that of other TV channels?

Please record your reactions - if any - during the celebrations, including any articles or magazine you may read about it, any TV programmes you watch or radio programmes you hear. If you are actively involved in some way, then of course we would like to have your account, or even a short diary.

If you want to add any further comments on the Royal Family in relation to current debates, please add them here.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES OR SOUVENIR ISSUES UNLESS YOU WANT TO MAKE A VERY SPECIFIC POINT AND IT RELATES TO YOUR DIRECTIVE REPLY. WE COULD BE SWAMPED AND WHAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN **YOUR** VIEWS, NOT THE MEDIA'S.

Part 3: Design a M-O Directive

This last part is a little bit of fun for summer, but with a serious motive.

I thought you might like the chance to design your own Mass-Observation directive. From time to time, members of our panel of correspondents send in comments on what they feel about the latest directive. Mostly you seem to enjoy them but occasionally we receive criticism and of course it is the criticisms that I tend to take to heart! One recent recruit, a young man, said he thought the themes were like school essays and he found them boring. Someone else said that asking for a two week diary for the end of 1999 and the start of 2000 was too much to ask. Another writer said that I was too "prescriptive" and he felt completely obliged to write about everything I asked him to even though he didn't want to!

So here's a chance to design your own:

- It can be on any subject or subjects that you feel would be of interest to researchers and writers alike.
- You do not have to follow the house style at all. Just because we do things in a certain way doesn't mean you have to. Be creative. Pick your own design and format.
- You can do it in handwriting, or on a type writer, or word-processed.
- You can have as many subjects as you think would work.
- You can use illustrations.
- Please put it on separate pages from the rest of your replies.

Bear in mind:

- Directives need to appeal to as wide a group of people as possible so make sure that you're not leaving some people out when you address them.
- The costs of sending out more than 4 sides of A4 paper are high.
- Some photos may not come out well when they have been photocopied.
- Handwritten ones would have to be re-typed to be sent electronically.

Comments on designing the directive:

Please add your own comments separately on designing the directive: why you chose to do it the way you did, why you chose the topics you did. From your designs I hope to learn something about the kinds of directives you prefer and the kinds of subjects you think are important to cover.

Past Directive themes:

On the reverse of this sheet, for the interest especially of those of you who have joined us more recently but also to jog the memories of the more long-standing correspondents, I have included a list of directive themes.

I HOPE TO INCORPORATE THE BEST DIRECTIVES (EITHER WHOLE OR USING EXTRACTS) INTO FUTURE MAIL-OUTS.

DS/Dir60/June 2000

Our address if you use a stamp: The Mass-Observation Archive, The Library University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QL.

If not: The Mass-Observation Archive FREEPOST 2112 The Library University of Sussex Brighton BN1 1ZX

If you use e-mail: moa@sussex.ac.uk

List Of M-O Directives from 1981 to the present

This is a very brief summary of the themes of the directives we have sent out over the past 19 years - just to give you some idea of the subjects we have covered. You will see some repeats and overlaps, but also some major gaps which we will hope to fill with future directives.

1: Summer 1981: Currency, Royal Wedding, Business Premises, Unemployment, Holidays, Food
2: Royal Wedding Special 1981: Diary for the Day
3: Autumn 1981 Currency, Pet Food, Shopping Strategies, Business Premises, Unemployment, Liberal-SDP Alliance, Christmas
4: Spring 1982 House Prices, Unsolicited Mail, Weather in January, Railway Strike, Local Elections, Business Premises, Unemployment, Falklands/Malvinas War.
5: The Falkland Islands Crisis 1982: War with Argentina
6: Summer 1982: Public Services, Private Services, The Budget, Gas & Electricity Bills, Royalty, Inflation, Currency, Food, EEC.
7: EEC Special: Tenth Anniversary of British Entry Into Europe
8: Autumn 1982: Pocket Money, Business Premises/Cheque Books/Currency
9. Falklands/Malvinas Postscript 1982: Falklands War Aftermath: Reactions To Falklands Parade, October 1982.
10: Winter 1982 Food, Gardening.
11: Spring 1983: The General Election, Waterworkers' Strike, Coinage, Viewing and Reading
12: Summer 1983: Work
13: Autumn 1983: Housework & maintenance, business premises.
14: Winter 1983: Christmas Cards, Buying British
15: Spring 1984: Social Well-Being
16: Summer 1984: Electronic Banking, Miscellany
17: Autumn 1984: Attitudes To USA
18: Winter 1984: Relatives, Friends & Neighbours
19: Spring 1985: Morality & religion; Posters.

20: Autumn 1986: Self portrait Major Events; Christmas Day Diary.
21: Spring 1987: waste, thrift and consumerism; A.I.D.S. campaign.
22: May Special 1987 General Election
23: Summer 1987: Holidays ; day diary: August Bank Holiday 1987
24: Autumn/Winter 1987: The car; The hurricane and floods
25: Spring 1988: Clothing
26: Summer 1988: Time; Objects about the House
27: Autumn 1988: Regular Pastimes; TV Day-Diaries
28: Spring 1989 Disasters; Food News
29: Summer 1989: Rules of Conduct; Day Diary for June 15th, European Election Day
30: Autumn/Winter 1989 Relaxants And Stimulants; The 'Backing Britain' Campaign
31: Spring 1990: Social Divisions; Retrospective on The Eighties
32: Summer 1990: Close Relationships; Your Views On M-O
33: Autumn/Winter 1990: Celebrations; Gulf Crisis; Organisations
34: Spring 1991: Education; The Uses of Reading & Writing & Literacy Diaries; Taking Risks
35: Autumn 1991: Women & Men; Technology
36: Spring 1992: Personal Hygiene; The Pace Of Life; One Day Diary; 1992 General Election
37: Summer 1992: Nature & the Environment
38: Winter 1992: Growing Older; Looking Back at 1992; Last Night's Dreams
39: Spring 1993: Growing Up; Reading; Community/ Foreigners
40: Summer 1993: Pleasure; Security & Crime; Current Issues
41: Autumn/Winter 1993: Managing money; birth; the title "Mass-Observation"

42: Spring 1994: Death & Bereavement; Serial Killers; Autobiography & Diaries
43: Autumn/Winter 1994: Sport; Drugs; Current Events (Rail Strike, Ireland, Royalty, Criminal Justice Bill)
44: Spring 1995: Day Diary (Meals); The Countryside; Television Soap Operas
45: Summer 1995 Shopping in Britain
46: Autumn/Winter 1995: Images Of Where You Live: Cities, Towns, Villages; Mothers & Literacy; Subject of own choice
47: Spring 1996: The Lottery; Menstruation; Subject of own Choice
48: Summer 1996: Beef, BSE. & the "mad cow" debate; the supernatural
49: Autumn/Winter 1996: Using The Telephone; Unpaid Work; The Next General Election
50: Spring 1997: You & the NHS; The Next General Election
51: Summer 1997: Doing a Job; Being Overweight
52: Summer 1997 (Special) The Death of Diana
53: Autumn 1997: Music; Dancing; the Future
54: Spring 1998: The Garden And Gardening; Having An Affair
55: Autumn 1998: Present Giving And Receiving; Staying Well And Everyday Life
56: Spring 1999: Going to the Cinema; Current Issues; Documenting The Millennium
57: Summer 1999: The Public Library; Body Piercing & Tattooing; Current Events
58: Autumn 1999: Sleeping And Dreaming; Millennium Diary
59: Spring 2000: Travelling; Collecting Things
60: Summer 2000: Coming to Britain; Queen Mother at 100; Designing your own directive.

DS/June 2000