

Grade 9 Answer

Source Utility Question

8
Marks

Question:

How useful is Source A to a historian studying the 1926 General Strike?
(8 marks)

Answer:

Source A is useful to a historian studying the 1926 General Strike as it reflects how parts of the British media and society viewed the strike, particularly the volunteers who kept essential services running. The cartoon, published in Punch magazine, depicts Mr. Punch thanking a volunteer driving a truck labeled "Essential Services," portraying them as patriotic citizens who helped maintain order. This aligns with the government's narrative during the strike, which relied on middle-class volunteers to keep key services like transport and food supply operational. The strike, from May 3 to May 12, 1926, involved over 1.7 million workers from industries like coal mining, transport, and printing, protesting wage cuts and worsening conditions. The government framed the strike as a threat to national stability, deploying volunteers and publishing the British Gazette to control public opinion, much like Punch does in this cartoon. The source is also useful because Punch is a satirical magazine with a middle-class readership, which often reflected conservative views. Its publication during the strike provides a real-time perspective of those who opposed the strikers, seeing volunteers as heroic defenders of order. This helps historians understand how media shaped pro-government sentiments.

However, the source has limitations, as it ignores the workers' grievances over pay cuts and long hours. The cartoon doesn't mention the solidarity among strikers or the hardships faced by working-class families, instead focusing on the volunteers. Additionally, the source reflects a biased perspective, only showing the views of conservatives, so does not give a true reflection of attitudes towards the strike. In conclusion, Source A is useful for understanding the government-aligned perspective of the strike and how volunteers were portrayed, but its bias limits its ability to provide a complete view of the strike's causes and the experiences of the workers.

Feedback:

This answer would get 8/8 marks because the pupil has given a judgement of the utility of the source, giving supporting factual knowledge and commenting on the provenance of the source. They have explained each point in depth, kept a focus on the question, and given an overall judgement.



Source A

Source A: A cartoon published in Punch Magazine in 1926. Mr Punch is thanking members of the public who kept essential services running during the strike. Punch was a satirical magazine that often reflected conservative views.



“THE BRITISH WORKER.”

MR. PUNCH (to Volunteer). “THANK YOU, SIR.”

[With Mr. Punch's enthusiastic compliments to the great army of amateur workers who sustained the Nation's life.]