

Coursework 2

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The evacuation of British Children

Which source is the more useful as evidence about the start of the children's evacuation journey?

Explain your answer using Sources B and C and knowledge from your studies.

Source B is a photograph of evacuees walking to a station in London in September 1939. All there is a mass of children all walking and waving looking at the camera. They are all walking on the pavement, and the teachers are walking on the road. All the children look very happy and seem to be looking forward to the adventure. This source is useful to the extent that it shows you what the children were wearing. You can see the bags and the labels on the children as well as the types of clothes they wore. It also shows you where the children had to walk and the fact that they did have to walk to the stations on their own, with the other class mates in a mass group.

However, the source has many reliability problems. The source is a photograph therefore it is only one moment in time. This picture also might have been staged out and therefore could show us nothing on what really did happen. If the photograph is real, the other problem is that, the evacuation process might not have happened in this way elsewhere. This could be just the way they did it in London. Another problem with this source is that we don't know why the photograph was taken. It could have been just anyone taking a picture as a one off, or it could have been a government picture for use as propaganda to try and encourage mothers and fathers that evacuation is a great idea. Another fault is that there is a teacher standing in the road looking at the camera waving, with all the other children waving and smiling too. The teacher could be telling the children to wave and smiling for the camera, which again brings me back to the theory of it being staged for use of propaganda. There is also one man walking to one side. He is the only man there which makes him seem very suspicious. He could be telling them all to wave, or he could be just passing by. The picture is taken in a poor part of London, which again could just show what happened in London when the evacuees left for the station. The photograph was also taken at the very start of evacuation (1939), therefore it only shows what might have happened. The process might have changed as time went on.

Source C is an interview with a teacher about the evacuation process with the children from the school she taught at. The teacher is talking about the feelings, sights and sounds from when they left for the station to when they were just about to get on the train. The source is useful as it tells the reader about the feeling and all the emotions running through the mothers as they watch their children leave for a new life. ('The mothers pressed against the iron gates calling "Good-bye darling"') It also tells us that the mothers weren't allowed to walk with the children to the station, they had to walk behind the group. It also tells us that the children were so scared that they couldn't speak, so therefore just murmured. The source is also useful as not only did the children and the parents didn't know where they were going, nor did the teachers, they were in the same position as the children were.

This source has many good points, as well as many faults. To start with, the interview was taken 49 years after the evacuation of this teacher happened. That's a long time and therefore the teacher might not have remembered all of what happened. The source is also very brief. It doesn't give much detail about things, like where they walked from, or which school it was she helped evacuate. Another fault is that it might have been so traumatic for the teacher that she could only remember the points that struck out the most at the time and not facts. The teacher might have just been looking back at the bad times in the interview. We don't know what kind of questions the teacher might have been asked in the interview.

In conclusion, I think that both sources are useful in their own respects. They both give very different feelings, but they are many faults with both of the sources. I think that neither one source is more efficient or useful than the other.

Source G is an extract taken from a novel. Is it reliable as evidence about evacuees? Explain your answer using source G and your own knowledge.

Source G is an extract from 'Carrie's War' written by Nina Bowden. The extract tells about what it was like for evacuees when they reach their foster homes. The children seem very happy and chirpy. The source tells you about what many children thought of their foster homes, and how the people saw the evacuees. But the reliability of the source needs to be questioned.

This source was taken from a story for children, so most of it could have been made up to make it more interesting for children to want to read it. It also may have a lot of details taken out as it might not be suitable for children to read. It is a story and therefore many not be factual. It was written in 1977 which was a long period after the evacuation process, with many things may have been forgotten. Another fault is that we are not sure of what the context is, this again is something that we need to question. The women in the Novel gives a very stereotypical view. She makes out to think that all the evacuees were poor and that they couldn't afford things. (E.g. Slippers.) We know for a fact that not all the children were poor as many private schools were evacuated as well. Nina Bowden was not an eye witness, was she even evacuated? She could just be making up a nice story for children to read. She must have done research to find out about evacuees, where the sources in which she got her information could have been incorrect.

In conclusion I think that the source's reliability is very questionable. Did Nina Bowden have access to all the evidence, we don't know so we can not state if it is factual or if her novel was for children just to read and enjoy. I think that we need to read more of the novel and also take a look at the research that Nina did to find out whether or not the source is reliable or not.

“Evacuation was a great success.”

Do you agree or disagree with this interpretation? Explain using the sources and the knowledge from your studies.

In August 1938 Adolf Hitler began making speeches that suggested he was going to send the German Army into Czechoslovakia. The British government now began to fear a war with Nazi Germany and Neville Chamberlain ordered that Air Raid Precautions (ARP) volunteers to be mobilized. Cellars and basements were requisitioned for air raid shelters, deep trenches were dug in the parks of large towns and the government also ordered the flying of barrage balloons over London.

The government also made plans for the evacuation of all children from Britain's large cities. Sir John Anderson, who was placed in charge of the scheme, decided to divide the country into three areas: evacuation (people living in urban districts where heavy bombing raids could be expected); neutral (areas that would neither send nor take evacuees) and reception (rural areas where evacuees would be sent).

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War the government decided to begin moving people from Britain's cities to the designated reception areas. Some people were reluctant to move and only 47 per cent of the schoolchildren, and about one third of the mothers went to the designated areas. This included 827,000 schoolchildren, 524,000 mothers and children under school age, 13,000 expectant mothers, 103,000 teachers and 7,000 handicapped people. But was this a success? To help me answer that question I have decided to analyse some of the evidence given to me in sources.

Source A is an interpretation of the relation between evacuees and the hosted families. The source tells you what the children were like and how much shock all the children were in when they arrived at their new homes. Another good point of the source is that it was written for schools so the author is likely to have checked the evidence. But the source has many faults in helping me answer the success of evacuation.

The source is an interpretation, so facts could be very incorrect. It was written for a text book, so there may have been things missed out as the context of them may have not been appropriate. It was also written for British schools, so I may be biased towards Britain. The book was also written a while after the war, so again things may have been forgotten or missed out. The source is useful as I have given evidence towards how new life was like, but it's not all reliable.

Source B is a photograph of evacuees walking to a station in London. The children all look very happy as they are walking and they are all waving to the camera. This source has also a number of problems with its reliability.

The source is just one moment in time, and it also could have been staged. The teacher in the picture could be telling the children to wave as they go past the camera. Another fault is that the evacuation process might not have taken part in the same way all over the country, so this again shows faults in the reliability of the source. The purpose of the source is also unknown. It could have been taken for propaganda reasons, to try and get people to send their children out of an area.

The photograph was taken very early on the evacuation process. Changes might have occurred in the way things happened or children were treated. The source helps me as it gives evidence on what the children were wearing and how they all got to the stations, but the reliability of the source is very questionable.

Source C is a teacher remembering what happened to her and the children she was with, when she was evacuated. The source gives great emotion details on what was said and how all the children and mothers were feeling, but there are some problems with the reality of the source.

The source was given by a teacher who has been interviewed 49 years after she was evacuated. She may have forgotten details, or it might have been so traumatic for her that she remembers only the bad parts of the evacuation process. The source is also only a small moment in time. There might have been more things going on while she can only remember these parts. The source is useful as it gives me an emotional account of what the evacuation process was like, but the reliability of the source questions my views.

Source D is a photograph of evacuees at bath time. The photograph is of 4 boys in one bath, smiling and laughing away. It gives them an impression that evacuees were very happy, but there are many problems with the source.

The photograph was issued by the government during the war, so it might be propaganda, again encouraging mothers and fathers to let their children be evacuated. The photograph might not have anything to do with evacuation. It could be a poster for the water campaign. ('Don't have more than 4 inches of water in a bath. Wash all the boys in one bath and all the girls in another.') It could be encouraging mothers to wash all the children together, so that they can help save water. The source might not have anything to do with evacuation, so therefore it is of little use to me.

Source E is from an interview with a lady of a 'host family.' The source tells you all about how the children that she fostered behaved. The source is useful as it is telling you about how ill-mannered the children were, but the source is also unreliable.

The children seem to be very stereotypical and that the lady might just have ended up with some bad children. The lady might also have forgotten all the positive points about the children because the first impression was very traumatic for her. Details also might have been forgotten as the interview took place about 49 years after the evacuation process had started. The source is useful as it gives me a view from a foster home, but there are many problems with the evidence that it gives me.

Source F is from an interview with someone who was evacuated. The source tells you about the kind of conditions that some children faced. The source also tells you about the stereotyping of city children and how they were assumed to be uneducated. But however the source has a few reliability problems.

The story was from an interview, so the person that was being interviewed could have made things up to make it seem more dramatic, and more like a story. The person who gave the information could also have been very young and therefore could have forgotten details.

The interview seems very stereotypical, as it says that well-educated children found themselves in a grubby semi-slum. The source is useful, but the reliability of it is uncertain.

Source G is an extract from a novel ('Carrie's War') written by Nina Bowden in 1973. The source is about evacuees at their new foster homes. The source is useful as it gives emotional feeling and thought on what happened when they arrived at their new foster homes. The source has many problems with the reliability of it.

The source was written for children, so there may have been some problems with the amount of truth in what the source is saying, as the context of what really happened might have been unsuitable for children to read. The source is very stereotypical towards children being poor. We know for a fact that many middle and upper class children were evacuated, as many private and public schools were evacuated. We are also unsure of what the context is as well. The source was also written in 1973, which was a while after the evacuation process started, so there have been many details missing. The source is also a novel, a story to entertain children, so the information could all be untrue. The source is useful as it gives an insight into what life could have been like for evacuated children, but the reliability of the source questions this view.

Source H is a poster issued by the government in 1940, appealing for more foster homes in Scotland. The source is useful as it shows that there were a lot of children that wanted or were being evacuated, to the extent that the government needed more homes to put the children in. The source also tells us that children were evacuated all the way to Scotland. But how much of the source is true, as I feel the source is very unreliable.

The government issued the source, so it is more than likely to be propaganda. There are some statistics on the poster. The government could of just made them up so try and convince people to become foster parents. Did they really need more people? Or did they just say that they needed more people to convince parents that evacuation was working and that many children were being successfully evacuated? The poster also makes you wonder if the children were ever settled. The poster gives me the impression that the children kept moving around from place to place.

Source I is a father's opposition to evacuation. This extract is from a mass observation made in May 1940. The source shows us an opinion from a man that actually has a child of his own. It gives a clear view on what he thinks of evacuation. The man seems to be unconcerned in sending his seven-year-old boy to The Shires, Wales and the west. He wants his boy to stay with him and his family. But the source has a few problems with its reliability.

The source is from one person's view. It is only an extract from a mass survey. We don't know what the other people said about their views on evacuating. Some people might have agreed with the evacuation idea. The father in the source could of just said these things to make him seem very moral. He could just be putting it all on. His son could have been evacuated later on. The source also asks a question. What happened if an only parent dies? What happens to the child?

The source is useful as it shows a view on the evacuation process, the source could also be staged and therefore untrue.

Source J is a clip from a film called 'Hope and Glory' made in 1987. It tells the story of a family during world war 2 from the point of view of a young boy. The source is very powerful and involves his mothers final refusal to allow her children to be evacuated. The source is useful as it shows us, that children had to grow up very quickly. They also had to be very independent as many children were split from their brothers and sisters. The source also gives details on what the conditions were like. The station was very loud and busy. The children had to leave their mums and dads before they even got on the train. The process seemed very hard as the children had to leave their mothers and fathers.

It seemed also very hard to the parents, to watch their children leave them to head off somewhere, where they didn't even know where they were going. The source also showed me the importance of the children's labels. They had to wear them all the time, and they advisors needed to be able to see them. Another thing I learned from the source was that children went abroad. The source also showed me how it was all up to the mothers of the household to sort out whether or not the children went. I found that the source was useful as it showed me about the emotional side of evacuation as well as the details on what the stations were like and what the children wore, but the source has many reliability problems.

It was a film, so it was made to entertain people, so none of it could be factual. It was also from a young boy's point of view, so we are only seeing the things that he saw, and we also only understand the things that he understood at the time. The source was a re-enactment of what it could have been like to be evacuated. The source is only using male and female actors as the characters. It was also only a few moments in time. It could have been different in another place. The source is useful as it shows me an re-enactment of what it could or was like for a child to be evacuated, but as evidence to whether or not evacuation was successful, it is unreliable.

After having analysed the sources I have come to my conclusion that evacuation was a success for some children and families. Some of the evacuees had a great time and went to kind families who looked after them and often lived in better conditions than they were used to. The children discovered all kinds of things which they hadn't realised - for example, in the city, children were used to getting their milk in a bottle from the milkman. They didn't know that it came from cows! Some were amazed to learn this. But other evacuees had a bad experience, living with families who treated them like slaves and they missed their homes and parents very badly.

It was a success as the Government feared that the major cities would be bombed by the Germans. So they decided that the young people in Britain - the future of the country and also too young to look after themselves if their parents were killed - should be moved out of the danger areas for protection. This helped save lives, yet it was so unsuccessful as many children didn't get moved out of the towns for their parents were not convinced. I really think that evacuation was a success and a failure for these reasons.

