

Modern History

Section I (continued)

Question 3 (10 marks)

Assess how useful Sources C and D would be for an historian studying the Allies' approaches to Germany at the Paris Peace Conference.

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the two sources, and their reliability.

Both Sources C and D would be extremely useful for an historian studying the Allies' approaches to Germany after the war, although both have serious problems with reliability.

Source C provides a summary of Woodrow Wilson's perspective on the peace with Germany. It would be useful for an historian attempting to examine Wilson's intent before arriving in Paris. Wilson's idealism shines through in the wording of the speech and the text addresses what will become sticking points for German politicians (especially the section on embracing Germany in her legitimate influence).

Source C would serve as a good counterbalance for Source D's reservations about the peace process.

It would be very useful for an historian studying Allied approaches to peace, with the obvious proviso

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that it deals with only one of the ^{major} three Allies and does not reflect the views of the other two. In addition the speech is (essentially) propaganda; it documents the STATED approach of Wilson (on the public record). Confirmation of intent is required. The document is thus essentially unreliable, as ^{it is a} ~~SV~~ political address designed to present American involvement in the peace process in the most favourable light possible (and win over hostile Republicans to Wilson's point of view as well).

Source D is less useful since it does not directly express the Allied approach to the peace, but it is extremely useful for the historian in understanding what the Allied negotiators were having to answer to. Source D documents some of the objections the German government registered over the settlement at Versailles. This would let the historian know which sections were particularly objectionable to Germany and perhaps also help him or her understand some of the concessions the major powers made.

Source D, like source C, is inherently unreliable. It is a note specifically designed to present the official German point of view on Versailles (one which is now generally rejected). As a political argument it is essentially unreliable.

End of Question 3