Bell Ringer: Paul Revere’s Depiction of the Boston Massacre that occurred March 5th, 1770

Instructions: Examine this picture, read the description and then answer the questions below.

Background: On March 5th, 1770, some Colonists were protesting various taxes and other actions that Britain had taken. The Colonists were being very hostile and aggressive with the British soldiers stationed in Boston. As hostilities grew, British soldiers fired into a crowd in Boston and killed five people. Paul Revere drew this cartoon to bring attention to the event.

1. The British are to the right in this picture. How do you think Paul Revere wanted the observer of this picture to view the British soldiers? How does he want you to view the actions, attitudes, and moral character of the British soldiers in this picture? Explain.

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2. Why do you think Paul Revere drew a picture of this event? Why didn’t he simply write an article? Explain.

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Answers:

1. The British are to the right in this picture. How do you think Paul Revere wanted the observer of this picture to view the British soldiers? How does he want you to view their actions, their attitudes, their character, etc. EXPLAIN.

Paul Revere clearly wanted people to view the British soldiers in a negative way. While, historically, the soldiers were panicked and responding to the mob with fear and anxiety, the picture depicts them as organized, deliberate, and livid in their actions. This is propaganda to get the Colonists angry at Britain. This does not justify the actions of the soldiers, it just means Revere exaggerated the deliberateness with which the soldiers attacked the people with.

2. Why do you think Paul Revere drew a picture of this event? Why didn’t he simply write an article? Explain. Paul Revere wanted to encourage people to be outraged by the British action. The image served as a better means of propaganda to make the colonies upset at what the British did.