GCE History – Unit 4 – Depth Study 2

4.2 Royalty, Rebellion and Republic c.1625–1660

Part 2: Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate c. 1642–1660

General context of the period

- 1642 marks the breakdown in relations between Crown and Parliament and the declaration of war.
- The Civil War and the battles between Royalist and Parliamentary armies.
- The conflict exposed the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership of the Royalist cause including Charles I and Prince Rupert.
- The war also highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership of the Parliamentary forces such as the replacement of Manchester as leader by Fairfax and Cromwell.
- The emergence of the New Model Army transformed the nature and conduct of warfare.
- The plundering of towns, terrorising of civilians and exerting control of urban and rural communities.
- The attitude and actions of the king contributed to the failure in attempts to reach a political settlement.
- The period witnessed the emergence of political and religious radicalism such as the Levellers; Fifth Monarchists and Ranters. This served to deepen the political and religious divisions in the country.
- The Royalist forces were all but defeated by 1646.

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War in the period from 1643 to 1646.

[30]

Key: Values / Limitations / Other points of note

Summary of points, including:

- **notes on the sources and their attributions/ provenances**
- **notes on the specific context of the sources.**

Source A

Richard Atkins, a Captain in the Royalist army, writing in his official report of their victory at the battle of Roundway Down (1643).

At the battle of Roundway Down, it was my good fortune to charge Sir Arthur Heselrig, commander of the Parliamentary forces on the right. He discharged his rifle first and I then discharged mine; I'm sure I hit him, for he staggered off from his party and ran from the battle. I pursued him and in one hundred yards I came up to him, and discharged my pistol at him. I am sure I hit his head, but he was too well armoured all over for a pistol bullet to do him any hurt, having a coat of mail over his arms and a headpiece that was full metal and musket proof. I then tried to kill his horse by cutting it in several places whereupon the horse began to faint with bleeding, and Sir Arthur fell off. Before I could take his head for a trophy, a group of well-armed troopers, a motley band of roundhead curs in full retreat, charged and rescued him. The victory was ours but it matters not that we triumphed but that I did miss the opportunity to kill one whom had shown such disloyalty to our sovereign. His death alone would have been satisfaction enough for me.

- From an official report of the battle of Roundway Down and is penned by a Royalist officer.
- The author of the source offers a personal opinion of the battle from the Royalist side but, despite it being clearly biased, it is still of use to the historian studying the conduct of armies during the Civil War.
- The source provides some evidence of the motivation of those engaged in battle during the Civil War.
- This was but one bitter engagement (July 1643) in a long list of battles fought during the war.
- This source is particularly valuable because it shows that, for some soldiers, their conduct was driven by personal duels with bitter rivals.
- There is little mention of the outcome of the battle, just that he was upset that he hadn't killed his rival.
- This source offers the historian valuable evidence about the conduct and mind-set of many of those who took part in the Civil War and the depth of the personal hatred that existed between enemies.
- The report would be read by a small number of people and was unlikely to be shared with the rank and file soldiers.
- It does not really describe the battle in detail or discuss some important issues such as strategy and tactics, which would have proven useful for shaping the conduct of future battles.

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Source B

Extract from a pamphlet entitled *The souldiers catechisme: composed for the Parliaments Army*, issued by Parliament to its soldiers in 1644.

Q. What side are you on, and for whom do you fight?

A. I am for Parliament; or in plainer terms; I fight to recover the King out of the hands of a Popish Malignant Company, that have seduced His Majesty with their wicked Counsels and have withdrawn him from his Parliament. I fight for the laws and liberties of my country, which are now in danger of being overthrown by them who have long laboured to bring into this Kingdom an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Government. I fight for the preservation of Our Parliament, which, under God, consists of the glory and welfare of this Kingdom. I fight in defence of the true Protestant Religion, which is now violently opposed.

Q. But is it not against the King that you fight in this Cause?

A. No, yet many do abuse the world with this base and absurd accusation: our only aim is to rescue the King out of the hands of his and the Kingdom's enemies and to maintain his honour and just Prerogatives. We endeavour to defend that which the King is bound to defend, both by his Oath and his Office. We take up arms against the Popish enemies who, in His Majesty's name, do make war against the Church and People of God.

- From a pamphlet published by Parliament for distribution among its soldiery.
- The identity of the author is unknown but may be a serving officer in the Parliamentary army.
- The pamphlet was designed to help Parliament's soldiers by explaining, in an easy to follow question and answer approach, why they are fighting.
- The source is a piece of blatant propaganda from 1644, two years into a conflict of which the outcome was still very much in the balance.
- The source shows the lengths to which Parliament are prepared to go to push their side of the story but also to inspire their troops at a critical juncture in the conflict.
- The source is crucial in demonstrating the complexities involved in conducting a war—winning the hearts and minds of the troops and the people are seen as essential tools.
- The tone of the source suggests that parliament is trying to appear even-handed—their troops are not fighting against the king, only those around him who are malignant influences.
- The pamphlet is an effective piece of propaganda and does much to enhance the historian's knowledge of the conduct expected of armies during this period.
- The publication and distribution of the pamphlet assumes a degree of literacy on the part of Parliament's soldiers.

Source C

Robert Jones, Alderman of the City of Bath, writing in a letter to Captain John Harington of the New Model Army (1646).

Good Sir, it is commanded of me to give the thanks of our City of Bath, and all its inhabitants, to you for your care and concern in providing your own company to come here, and thereby preventing such disorder as does often happen under soldier-like quarterings. Your troop behaved well, as your good direction did so endeavour they should. Major Hewlet got in the levies as commanded, in such manner as the rate observed all over the west. Many citizens had no money ready and were threatened with pillage. Eighteen horses were provided at the market house, and delivered up, as you desired; but the men required were excused on your desiring, nor was any seizure made, or plunder, except in liquors and bedding. The town house was filled with troops that came from Marlborough in their march westward. Our meal was taken by the Marlborough troop, but they shared it out to many of the poorer sort. Our beds they occupied entirely, but no greater mischief has happened as yet. We have had no divine service as yet because the Churches are full of troops, furniture and bedding. God preserve our Kingdom from these sad troubles much longer.

- From a letter commissioned and penned by a member of the Bath City governing elite to a parliamentary officer.
- The source provides some insight into the course of the Civil War by 1646, four years into the conflict.
- The source offers a contrasting perspective of the war from the point of view of civilians caught up in the conflict.
- The tone of the source is conciliatory and, to some extent, appreciative of the conduct of the soldiers.
- The city official is aware that the Parliamentary occupation could have been worse had the officer not been so accommodating.
- There are hints in the source to some awkward encounters with the troops which highlights the fragile relations between the two sides.
- The source is of considerable value to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the war, particularly the demands made of civilians by the military authorities from supplies of food and shelter to recruits for the armed forces.
- The private nature of the letter suggests that it was not for publication or distribution and was read only by the individual to whom it was addressed.
- It appears to be objective and unbiased in its content, simply relaying the facts of the encounter between civilians and troops.

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Keeping the question in mind, use the information above and identify similarities and differences between the sources. These may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

Similarities between the sources
Sources A, B and C are all focused on aspects of the Civil War and the conduct of troops on both sides of the conflict.
Sources B and C are concerned with the conduct of Parliamentary troops.
Sources A and C involve the attitude, behaviour and conduct of military officers, both Royalist and Roundhead.
Differences between the sources
Source A differs from Sources B and C in that it involves a Royalist.
Source B differs from Sources A and C in that it is a publication for public consumption as opposed to a private letter and military report.
Source C differs from Sources A and B in that it provides a civilian viewpoint of the conflict.

Now, considering the general context of the period, your analysis of the sources and their provenances, identification of the specific content and identification of similarities and differences, outline and explain the value and limitations of the sources – both individually and collectively – to an historian studying the issue in the question. Again, these may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

What is the value of the source or sources to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War?	Why is this a value? (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)
The most significant value of Source A to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War is that it shows the motivation of some of those engaged in the conflict.	This is of value because it shows that some soldiers were driven by personal duels with bitter rivals with an apparent disregard for the outcome of the battle. The bigger picture was lost on some of these selfish individuals who took advantage of the chaos of war to settle old scores and private feuds.
The most significant value of Source B is that it was intended to enlighten the troops, to help them understand why, and for whom, they were fighting.	The value of this source is its attempt at inclusivity. Although it was propaganda, there is a clear attempt by the military leadership to share the reasons for war with their rank and file.
Source C is valuable because it offers a contrasting perspective of the war from the point of view of civilians who were caught up in the conflict and very much at the mercy of the military.	This source is valuable because it shows the interaction between civilian and soldier. It shows that some troops conducted themselves with honour and respect though tensions were clearly evident between them.
Taken together, these three sources are of significant value because they offer contrasting experiences of war at various points during the conflict e.g. towards the beginning, middle and end of the First Civil War.	The sources demonstrate the motivation and experience of soldiers from both sides and the civilians who had to deal with them.
What are the limitations of the source or sources to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War?	**Why is it a limitation? (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)**
The most significant limitation of Source A for historians is that the extract is meant to be a report of the battle but is focused instead on a narrower, personal battle within a battle.	This does little to explain the wider strategic nature of the war and how the Royalist planned and executed their battle plans. It is simply a vivid account of a personal feud.
For Source B, the most significant limitation is that it is propaganda with a biased explanation that is decidedly one-sided.	Despite the attempt to appear even-handed, the publication has an underlying anti-royalist and anti-papal theme.
For Source C, the most significant limitation is that the letter writer was commanded to pen the piece as a thank you to the occupying troops for their good behaviour.	The motivation of those, presumably the city elite, in penning this missive is ambiguous – was it genuinely a thank you or borne of fear at what the troops might do e.g. 'no greater mischief has happened as yet'. There is an expectation of trouble which suggests the city fathers have been too hasty in writing their thank-you note or are intending to influence or shape the troops future behaviour.

In summary, what *is* the value of these sources to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War in the period from 1643 to 1646?

Overall, all three sources are of some value to an historian studying the conduct of the armies during the Civil War in the period from 1643 to 1646. Each one offers a distinctive perspective of the conflict especially in the conduct of the armies on both sides and, in Source C, the impact this had on civilians. The motivation of those who took part in the conflict is clearly expressed in Source A, as is the attitude and behaviour of the military leaders in Source B.