

# Source base questions - kmt-ccp rivalry



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Section A (Source-based Case Study) Answer all parts of Question In answering the questions you should use your knowledge and understanding of the period to help you interpret and evaluate the sources. You must use the sources to which you are specifically directed, but you may use any of the other sources where they are helpful.

1 This question is about KMT-CCP Rivalry (1911-1937)

Study the sources and then answer the questions.

Source A: An illustration showing peasants being evicted for not being able to pay rent, produced by the communists during World War II

Source B: From the Communist Army's "Eight rules for the soldier in the countryside", issued in the early 1930s. A warlord's recollection of his activities in the early 1920s.

1. Replace all doors when you leave a house.
2. Return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep.
3. Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can.
4. Return all borrowed articles.
5. Replace all damaged articles.
6. Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.
7. Pay for all articles purchased.
8. Be sanitary and, above all, establish latrines (lavatories) a safe distance from people's houses.

Source C: A warlord's recollection of his activities in the early 1920s.

Whenever we ran out of food, we would raid a little village to get a few

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chickens, etc. A village was inhabited by ten families or less. My men would surround a village before dawn and fire several shots to intimidate the people. We told them to come out and give up. This was the classic method of raiding a village. Sometimes we killed and carried away little pigs weighing around thirty catties. We took corn, rice, potatoes, taro. Did we take money? No. There was no money to be had anyway.

Source D: Photograph of the early days of the Red Army. Although they had very poor equipment they had strong discipline.

(a)

Study Source A

Using details from the cartoon, explain what the cartoon is trying to show. e. g. in Source A, the cartoon shows us that the KMT (Kuomintang or Nationalist Party) officers were totally on the side of the rich landlord demanding greater taxes. Exploitation of the peasants took various forms. Not only were heavy taxes levied, many of which were collected in advance, but also peasants were forced to provide carts, animals and farm produce. The source also shows one such officer in hostile action against a peasant and his family. Judging from their poor attire and the fact that the loss of the two bushels of food grain represented a great loss to them, we understand that this family is a very poor one. The officer is commanding the peasant to hand over grain to the landlord. The peasant is very angry at the unfair demand, which is evident by his clenched fists. It also shows his impotence to offer any stiffer resistance to the officer and the landlord due to the overall cloak of oppression that has smothered the populace during the domination by the KMT regime. The peasant's wife is beseeching the landlord to have mercy as they need that food for their family, especially the

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crying child. In response, the obese landlord is pointing a jocular finger at the wailing child meaning that he does not care about the wellbeing of a brat like that. The cartoonist is telling us that despite the oppressive hardship and poverty of the peasants, the corrupted KMT government was still exploiting them unmercifully. Source A seems to drive the message that the communists were sympathetic about the hardship of the people and this is in stark contrast to the corrupt Nationalists. Source A is also a communist cartoon and thus may be a propaganda tool to incite the sense of anti-KMT feeling among the peasants and thereby channeling their support towards the communists.

[5]

(b)

Study Source B

How useful is Source B in telling you about the discipline in the Red army?

Explain your answer.

Source B is useful as it talks about the codes of discipline in the Communist Army. We can see that the communists emphasized strict discipline conduct that "all articles purchased" must be paid for. This could be one of the many reasons why the peasants were attracted to communism. As compared to democracy and capitalism, communism paid more attention to the common man, social problems and their solution. The message that Source B is trying to convey is that the CCP is trying to win more support from the people. The source depicts the communists as being honest and caring, and since communism laid great emphasis on strict discipline and self-sacrifice (which is evident from the rules set down to their soldiers), this was very appealing to the general public as it upheld the values of Chinese tradition besides

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restoring self-respect and national pride. The Communists laid great emphasis on this code of rules because they wanted to prove to the populace that communism would never resort to the blatant, unfair treatment meted out to the people by the KMT and all those they unfairly supported against the people. However, there is information that is not provided in the source. It does not tell us whether all communist members adhere to the conduct as exemplified in the codes. Furthermore, the source does not provide any detail of how they would enforce the codes, for example, rewards and punishment. Source B's usefulness is supported by Source D. In the photograph, it shows neatly attired communist cadres marching in unison and they seem to be in high spirits. The photograph also shows the orderliness of the young communists. It gives us strong evidence of the strict discipline of the Red Army that dutifully carried out Mao's Eight-point code. From contextual knowledge, we know that the communists gained greater support and they acted in a manner commanding respect due to the eight-point code advocated by Mao.

[6]

(c)

Study Sources C and D

In what ways are the two sources different? Explain your answers.

Source C tells us that the KMT army was very ill disciplined and that the warlords ruled like dictators with violence and force. This can be seen from how the warlord and his men would raid "raid" villages and "intimidate" the villagers to get "corn, rice... taro". Frequent warlord warfare destroyed crops, plants and farms. Warlord army soldiers were nothing less than bandits who seized farm equipment, produce and cattle. Trade declined

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rapidly mainly because of improper handling of currency by warlords - they went on printing paper money without restriction. Also, heavy taxes and regular confiscation of goods from peasants by warlord soldiers discouraged trade. Businessmen were forced to pay huge "donations" regularly to the warlords. Furthermore, the source also suggests that the Nationalists were corrupt and not united. In contrast, Source D shows us the strong discipline of the Red Army, the procession in the street was executed in an orderly manner. This can be seen in the conformity of the march. The communists in the photograph also epitomize a sense of neatness and frugality from their uniforms. We can infer that the communist officers must have given precise instructions on army regulation and appropriate behaviour. The communist principle of group unity was joyously welcomed by the people as a weapon against both the warlords as well as the foreign imperialist powers.

Communism was seen as the most advanced philosophy, and was a goal not yet achieved even in Western Europe or America.

Source C is alerting us about the corruptness of the KMT government and perhaps the reasons why it failed to win the peasants. The source is an indication of the negative characteristics of the Nationalists who fiddled in deplorable acts of "raiding" villages for "corn, rice, potatoes, taro". Buoyed by the awesome power accorded to the warlords, their army soldiers wandered at will, brazenly stealing and appropriating as they liked and desire. There was nothing they would not do for money, with no care about the welfare of the common peasants who grew increasingly despondent and desperate in the face of this injustice. On the other hand, Source D is trying to convince the Chinese peasants and the wider audience that the CCP were disciplined and organized. This was in stark contrast to the KMT troops. The

communists wanted to be seen as the champion of the poor people. By showcasing the orderliness of the procession, which was largely made up of teenagers, the communists were trying to attract the support of the peasants. With the emergence of communism, for the first time the notion of equality and Keming (revolution) loomed as saviours to the suffering populace. Chinese intellectuals became communist leaders, directing the ignorant peasants into proper order to at last have meaning and self-pride in their lives.

[6]

(d)

Study all sources

" The CCP was largely successful because the Nationalists were corrupted and ill-disciplined." How far do the sources support the statement? Explain your answer.

Agree with the statement

e. g. Yes, Source A agrees with the statement. Under the Nationalists, administration was carried out by violence, force and corruption. Soldiers seized farm animals, tools and crops with brazen impunity as they feared no reprisal. The people were taxed heavily due to which trade and industry remained crippled. Even the scholar gentry (social leaders) in villages were either allied with or subservient to the Nationalists in jointly exploiting the people. Source A is a propaganda cartoon from the communists to incite anger among the people against the Nationalists. The cartoon shows that the Nationalists helping the rich businessman, forcing the poor family to pay more taxes even though they already had little to eat. The cartoon scores a direct hit at the most drawback of the Nationalist rule, namely, the heavy

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yoke of corruption and domination exerted over the common people making them helpless in the face of such exploitation. During the Nationalist rule, the populace craved for self-respect and justice - the CCP was aware of this and therefore, as is shown in the cartoon, constantly did their best to remind the people of the atrocities they were being made to endure, while at the same time pointing to their communist ideals as the one and only way to throw off the burden that was crushing them.

e. g. Yes, Source C agrees with the statement. Ever since Yuan Shih-k'ai (the "father of the Chinese warlords") died in 1916, the country fell to pieces. The powerful warlords commanded personal armies and ruled territories without being subjected to the republican central government in Peking, which was reduced to a powerless entity. Some of the more powerful warlords ruled over two or three provinces. Warlords were men lacking ideology, who lived lives of luxurious debauchery, and thrived on forcibly exploiting peasants by different types of unjust taxes and corrupt practices, all designed to amass personal wealth for themselves. Owing to the large territorial area involved, warlords on many occasions gave army commanders control and power of taxation over selected territorial segments. In most cases, such commanders soon became so very wealthy and powerful that they became independent warlords themselves. This period witnessed many political assassinations; money and bribes (called "silver bullets") were offered to lure officers of a rival warlord. Many warlords started fighting for control of Peking, their prime motive being corruption and greed because they could then obtain foreign loans in the name of the national government. Parliamentary rule in Peking became a plaything under the warlords and completely lost its meaning. Due to the struggle for Peking



by the warlords, during 1916 to 1928 the Chinese national government was in turmoil; it changed leadership rapidly with 7 heads of state, 7 periods of caretaker governments and 25 cabinets in quick succession. Source C tells us that warlord and his troops engaged in shameful acts of raiding villages for food when the people were already so poor, "there was no money to be had anyway". Also, the source tells us that instead of protecting the Chinese peoples welfare and safety, the KMT government allowed its troops to "intimidate the people". The ill-disciplined nature of the KMT troops implies to the Chinese people that the Nationalists were no different from robbers and thieves. Hence the peasants gave their support to the CCP as they seemed to champion their cause to fight poverty and landlessness. Under the KMT, a state of social instability prevailed due to an unbalanced development with a feeling of distrust by the masses towards corrupt authority. Warlords paid no attention to social reforms, as a result of which this period witnessed terrible social turbulence, making deep dents in Chinese social tradition as human relationships were not based on morality but on the promise of rewards; social mobility increase inappropriately and lopsidedly as poor, illiterate peasants could become military officers and even warlords. Warlord disorder contributed to the expansion of Chinese communism. The warlord period proved that a parliamentary republic based on the western model was a total failure. The Chinese were therefore more than willing to consider other alternatives, the best of which was communism.

Disagree with the statement

e. g. No, Source B disagrees with the statement. Source B tells us that the communists victory was due to its strong emphasis on discipline. The source talks about the codes of discipline in the Communist Army. We can see that

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the communists emphasized strict discipline conduct that " all articles purchased" must be paid. This could be one of the reasons why the peasants were attracted to communism. The source also depicted the communists as being honest and caring. It was the primary aim of the CCP to gain the full confidence of the common people and the best way to do this was to prove to them that communist soldiers would never be permitted to harass or deprive the people even in the slightest way.

e. g. No, Source D disagrees with the statement. In Source D, we can see that the CCP was largely successful because of the strict army regulations that they imposed on all members. The photograph shows the orderly manner in which the Red Army was marching along the street. In addition, from the photograph we can tell that the young cadres who joined the party were in high spirits full of positive energy. The depiction of such young communists carries with it the message that by supporting the CCP would there be hope and future for the Chinese people. This could be one of the main reasons for the CCPs success against the KMT government. The CCP, which was created in 1921 under the guidance of Soviet Russia with Mao Tse-tung as one of its prominent foundation members, ruled through political monoism. The CCP redefined the state as a ' dictatorship of the proletariat' or a ' people's democratic dictatorship'. No distinction was made between politicians and civil servants. To distance themselves from the negative effects associated with the word ' official' (guan), communists referred to government employees as administrative personnel (xingzheng ren yuan), working personnel (gongzuo ren yuan) or public servants (gongwuyuan). CCP workers were known as ' cadre' (gangbu). These terms deflated the status of state administrators, linking them to the concept of ' service' - service to the

people, service to the Revolution, and service to the country.

[8]

Acknowledgement:

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