

Question 1

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing about the reasons why the Provisional Government was overthrown. [30]

Passage A

The collapse of tsardom had left a power vacuum. Although the Provisional Government held office between February and October 1917 it never held power. It lacked the ruthlessness that the desperate situation demanded. The Provisional Government failed to appreciate the common view on the land question. It had been a chief role in peasant unrest since the emancipation of the serfs. When the government failed to carry out a major land redistribution the peasants in many parts of Russia took the law into their own hands and seized the property of local landlords. Disturbances in the countryside occurred daily in 1917. It would be appropriate to describe this as a national peasants' revolt. The Provisional Government had no real answer to the land problem.

Unable to fight the war successfully and unwilling to introduce the reforms that might have given it popular support, the Provisional Government tottered towards collapse... The failure of the Provisional Government followed from its political failure over the previous eight months. It was not that the Provisional Government had been bitterly rejected by the Russian people. It was more a matter of its inability to arouse genuine enthusiasm. Kerensky's government had come nowhere near to solving Russia's problems. Its support had evaporated. Economically incompetent and militarily incapable, the Provisional Government was not worth saving.

Adapted from M. Lynch, *From Autocracy to Communism Russia 1894–1941*, published in 2008.

Passage B

Strikes [in factories] reached a new height in September 1917. They revealed that the workers no longer believed in the capacity of the government to honour its pledges or in the willingness of factory owners to negotiate in good faith. The collapse of production, lock-outs, unemployment and violence profoundly changed the nature of the strike. For three days in September, a strike by 700,000 railway workers paralysed transportation; in mid-October 300,000 workers struck at textile factories in Ivanovo. They often led to violent confrontations that increased the breakdown of law and order (already marked by a rise in looting, physical violence and street justice). Strikes became the workers' main form of political participation. The workers' anger and aspirations provided the primary drive for early Soviet power – even if, ultimately, the Bolsheviks were to subvert the workers' impulses for their own gain.

On 23 October, by a 10–2 vote, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party endorsed Lenin's theses on seizing power. Meanwhile, the Petrograd Soviet made a tactical decision of great practical significance when it established the 'Military Revolutionary Committee'. This Bolshevik dominated body became the command centre during the November Revolution.

The Bolsheviks brilliantly exploited the situation... and on the night of 24 October, began seizing key centres of power in Petrograd. As Kerensky fled, the Bolsheviks began constructing a new state order.

Adapted from G. L. Freeze, *Russia: A History*, published in 2009.

Level 6 answer – 30 marks

Question	Part	the lack of reform
1		<p>Both passages hint at the importance of the war, although Passage B does not state it although examines the strikes caused as a result of the situation not being improved. However, Passage A argues that the Provisional Government's failures were important to it being overthrown, like inability to cope with the war or reform whereas passage B seems to be suggesting it was in fact the strength of the opposition of workers and the Bolsheviks that led to the Provisional Government's fall.</p>
	<p>EVAIL</p> <p>KU</p>	<p>Passage A argues a variety of reasons for the Provisional Government being overthrown; mainly based on its own failures, for example that it "lacked the ruthlessness" the situation needed. This has merit as the Provisional Government simply avoided reform, whether it be the Land Issue, industrial reform or demands of national minorities. Fundamentally, they were more concerned with initial liberal rights, like freedom of the press or releasing political prisoners, which did not improve the desperate situation of war and actually created more opposition. As passage A argues they "had no real answer" which resorted in peasant uprisings, hoarding grain and 8 hour bread queues, a leading cause of both urban and rural discontent. Equally, passage passage A is correct in blaming the war being fought "unsuccessfully". For example, the failed summer offensive of June 1917 led to 400,000 deaths, desertions and even more territory to lost. This then did lead to support being "evaporated" as the Provisional Government did seem weak and incapable as well as the fact that it it led to economic pressures at home, like the price of grain increasing by 100%.</p>
		<p>Therefore this scenario ^{passage} has weight in suggesting the Government "was not worth saving" as the lack of reform led to a lack of support. However, arguably it places too</p>

much emphasis on 'the war and claims that the Provisional Government had not been "bitterly rejected" in the start. Yet, there was still opposition to the Provisional Government, as it was still unelected and simply considered the 'old Guard' in disguise, just like the Tsars, hence leading people to not be satisfied with the Government. * Equally, the ~~source~~ passage does not consider how in fact continuing the war actually highlighted again how they were simply just like the Tsars, as well as the fact that it led to a lack of reform. Hence this arguably was a starting point for discontent with the government, which opposition was able to expand on, with attractive slogans like 'Peace, Bread and Land'. Therefore, on balance, this passage does have a significant amount of merit. It considers a variety of viewpoints regarding the war, lack of reform and the lack of strength of the government which gives a more balanced view. Despite not acknowledging the initial weaknesses of the provisional government or the strength of opposition, it is correct to place significant emphasis on the war as ultimately this was a main cause of death and discontent regarding the Land Issue.

EVAL

* For example, in Milyukov's speech in 1917, the crowd started 'who elected you?'

Passage B argues that the strength of opposition was more influential as a reason why the Provisional Government was overthrown, blaming strikes and the Petrograd Soviet which the Bolsheviks took advantage of. This view that workers' anger "provided the primary drive for early Soviet power" has merit to an extent. As the passage details of compelling evidence of a strike of 700,000 railway workers, ^{but} also ^{there was} uprisings in the

	July 'days of peasants and workers' which led to a drive for this movements. In fact strikes were common throughout the Provisional Government was common due due to high grain prices and the lack of wage rises which did indeed lead to the situation being 'brilliantly exploited by the Bolsheviks as slogans like: 'Peace Bread and Land' and 'All power to the Soviets' were used in order to capitalise on discontent and raise support.
KU	
EVAL	Furthermore, Passage B is correct in placing emphasis on the Petrograd Soviet establishing the Military Revolutionary Committee. This, along with the March 'Order Number One' which gave the Soviet command over the army, enabled the Bolsheviks and the Soviet to gain military strengths. However, this passage is limited as it does not stress enough emphasis on the war itself, which was a leading cause for such discontent. It does not acknowledge the Government's own failure not to implement reforms like boosting industrial production or making more consumer goods available, which was caused by attention being diverted because of the war. This was a main cause for strikes which

	then led to more support for the Bolsheviks. Furthermore, the passage is limited as it does not acknowledge the Kornilov Coup. The passage claims that the Petrograd Soviet was a 'Bolshevik dominated body' which led to them being able to take command, but this was largely down to the Kornilov Coup in August. In the failed attempt at a military coup, the Bolsheviks then became armed and were seen as heroes, in comparison to Kerensky hence leading to them then gaining a majority in both the Petrograd and Moscow Soviet in early September. This event is of some importance in allowing the growth of power of the Soviet and the Bolsheviks.
EVAL	

	<p>Therefore, passage B does have some merit. It gives compelling evidence to support the view of the strengths of opposition causing the fall of the Provisional Government. However, it fails to acknowledge and place emphasis on the reasons for worker strikes and strengths of opposition, which were mainly the war and the Kornilov coup.</p>
EVAL	<p>This therefore weakens the merit of the passage as despite that there being evidence to support this, it does not consider the wider picture.</p>
	<p>To an extent, both passages are flawed in their their reasons why the Provisional Government was overthrown. Passage A, does not consider the more pessimist view of the Government, whilst for passage B does not place enough emphasis</p>
	<p>on the war. However, ultimately passage A is more convincing than passage B. Despite passage B correctly placing emphasis on the role and extent of strikes and how this led to more opposition, it does not consider the wider picture of what contributed to this discontent. Passage A, has more merit as it does correctly examine the failures of the war but also how this led to economic pressures as well as the weak natures of the Government. This gives a more balanced and wider view, hence is more convincing.</p>
EVAL	

Examiner commentary

The opening paragraph outlines the views of the two interpretations. The response then examines Interpretation A and uses contextual knowledge to evaluate the views offered. The knowledge used is both relevant and detailed and well linked to the interpretation. It is balanced in its treatment, aware of some limitations and also draws some attention to other issues that played a role. The response then considers Interpretation B, again using detailed knowledge to evaluate it before considering the limitations which are also discussed in some depth, with well-supported analysis. The judgement is also balanced, acknowledging limitations in both interpretations before reaching an overall judgement which is supported. The response is very well focused and consistently analytical and balanced in its approach. If time allowed it would be unreasonable to expect further coverage or greater depth of knowledge to be used and therefore it is placed at the top of Level 6.

Question Part

1	<p>Passage A is far more convincing than Passage B in giving convincing reasons why the Provisional Government was overthrown. Lynch offers the view that the reason was failings of the Provisional Government; in particular 'it never held power' due to dual authority and its illegitimacy and it was 'militarily incapable', referring to things like the Kerensky offensive and the issue of World War 1. Conversely, in passage B, Freeze cites the role of the Bolsheviks, saying they 'brilliantly exploited the situation' and emphasises the role of worker opposition and urban discontent. Freeze is correct that the Bolsheviks played an important role in bringing about ^{the Provisional Government's} their downfall, but overall, the failings of the Provisional Government and the dire situation they inherited outweighs this.</p>
EVAL	<p>That is not to say however that Passage B is without strengths. Freeze notes that 'the workers' anger and aspirations provided the primary drive for early Soviet power'. Indeed, he is correct to suggest that ^{worker opposition} was was important. A strike at the Putilov works arguably sparked the February Revolution and one of Kerensky's biggest mistakes was to arm the workers of Petrograd when the Kornilov coup happened, as most were by that time committed Bolsheviks, as is indicated by the fact that when worker protests happened in June 1917 many posters bore the Bolshevik slogan 'All</p>



Question Part

		power to the Soviets'. He also writes that the Bolsheviks 'brilliantly exploited the situation'. Though this statement is extremely debatable it is true that the Bolshevik's opposition was effective. In total at this time there were just 10 000 Bolsheviks, although 1/3 of these were in St Petersburg. Lenin responded to the revolution in October 1917 very quickly. By the end of 1917 he had killed Kerensky, disbanded the Provisional Government and announced the Bolshevik seizure of power to the Congress of Soviets. Therefore, Freeze the reasons Freeze offers that the Provisional Government was overthrown ^{are} is not without merit, but overall the weaknesses ^{as} is outweigh the strengths.
		Passage B is far less convincing than Passage A overall. In particular saying that the 'Bolsheviks brilliantly exploited the situation' is not necessarily accurate. It was more due to failings of others rather than the Bolsheviks themselves. Trotsky later said that just 500 loyal troops could have prevented the revolution. In the Constituent assembly the Bolsheviks got 170 seats and the Socialist Revolutionaries got 375. Then, the right SRs and the Mensheviks made the grave mistake of walking out of the congress in protest, consolidating the Bolshevik majority. Thus overall, Passage B is less convincing than Passage A because it overestimates the effectiveness of Bolshevik opposition. It also



Question Part

		makes serious omissions, not mentioning the war or the Provisional Government's lack of authority. These are addressed in Passage A.
		Passage A gives more convincing reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. In particular, Freese Lynch notes that 'it never held power'. The members of the Provisional Government came from the Duma * they were mainly aristocrats and were not at all representative. For example, Prince GE Lvov, who was Prime Minister and Interior Minister, was a wealthy landowner with an estate near Moscow and a member of one of the oldest Russian noble families. Also, the Petrograd Soviet was much more representative. On 18th March 1917 they issued Soviet Order No 1 which stated that the orders of the Petrograd Soviet took priority over the Provisional Government. Thus, Passage A gives more convincing reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional Government because Dual authority and the undemocratic nature illegitimate nature of the Provisional Government meant that they never really 'held power'. He is also correct to say that they were ' unwilling militarily incapable'. This can be taken as referring to the First World War or the Kerensky offensive. Despite the Soviets demands for 'peace without annexations or indemnities',* foreign minister Miliukov promis told the allies that they would honour their
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Question Part

promises and continue the war to 'decisive victory'. This caused unrest and Guchkov and Milukov were forced to resign. In addition, the Kerensky offensive was an attempt to bring Russia closer to victory but 170000 ~~ab~~ deserted before the battle in June 1917 and 400000 died at the battle. It was a huge failure that lowered morale and ^{indicated} ~~proved~~ that the war could not be won. Thus, Lynch is more convincing in ~~the~~ ^{the} arguments he gives for the failure of the Provisional Government because undoubtedly the failings of the Provisional Government itself were far more important than the Bolsheviks.

Again though, Passage A does have weaknesses. Lynch notes that they were 'unwilling to introduce the reforms that might have given it popular support', which is not necessarily fair. They granted immediate amnesty to political prisoners, granted freedom of speech, the right to assembly, the right to vote and abolished the Secret Police. They even granted self-government to Finland and Ukraine. Thus, Passage A does have weaknesses as they did introduce liberal reforms ~~if~~ however, these reforms allowed opposition to be freely expressed. It would be more accurate to say that their reforms went too far than not far enough. Lynch also doesn't mention the importance of the Bolsheviks, but ~~th~~ as discussed, this was far less important than



Question Part

the reasons that Lynch does offer in showing the reasons the Provisional Government was overthrown. Hence, Lynch's interpretation is not entirely accurate as he makes important omissions and does not acknowledge the liberal principles.

Overall though, Passage A is still much more convincing than Passage B in showing the reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. Certainly, the importance of its own failings and its lack of authority far outweighed the Bolsheviks and urban discontent. Both Passages do make sense. Key points and neither fully address the issue of war, however the arguments made in Passage A are still far more convincing overall.

* ~~A~~ and most people in Russia wanted the war to end,

* It was therefore undemocratic. Indeed, when Miliukov announced the Provisional government one worker~~s~~ shouted 'Who elected you?'

