Triad Assignment #2: Constructing a Triad Essay—Our Second Attempt

The Triad Assignment #2 is essentially a repeat of what you did for the exam, based on the proposition that practice makes perfect and повторение—матер учения (repetition is the mother of learning). So the basic idea is to produce BOTH a thesis & bullet points AND a paragraph essay. There should be an organic connection between the two, with the thesis & bullet points representing the foundation for the essay that follows.

Purpose: The purpose of the assignment is to strengthen skills in the area of reading comprehension, making historical connections, assembling evidence, and composing an effective short essay of one paragraph.

Knowledge: By doing this assignment, you will acquire a firm comprehension of a set of important texts including and pertaining to the tsarist autocracy, the Russian Revolution(s) of 1917, and the character of the new Bolshevik state.

Skills: In this assignment you will develop the skill of making historical connections across a large mass of material; identifying evidence relevant to a particular thesis; and composing a coherent essay that effectively conveys and substantiates that thesis.

Tasks: Step 1) Choose ONE of triads below on which to work. Note that in the first triad, the term “autocracy” may refer both to the principle of autocracy and to the tsarist government specifically (the emperor and his bureaucracy). In the second triad, “the state” refers the government or ruling apparatus of the new Bolshevik regime after 1917, as well as to the very idea of the state (that is, its purpose).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>autocracy</th>
<th>the state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October Manifesto</td>
<td>proletariat (working class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Law of 23 April 1906</td>
<td>Constitution of the RSFSR (1918)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2) Identify the various course materials that are relevant to the issues in the triad, and review those materials carefully. This review period is critical.

Step 3) Compose a sentence that combines all three of the items in the triad and draws on the material that we have read to this point in the course. This is your thesis.

Step 4) Using bullet points, make EIGHT factually true statements, based on the reading and/or lecture/discussion, that either directly support or provide necessary context for the thesis statement. The relationship of evidence to the thesis must be clear. It is not sufficient simply to offer random material from the book or lecture. Each statement should include a reference to the source of that information (with a page or date reference. At least four of these pieces of evidence should come from reading.
Step 5) After having listed the evidence, go back and review the thesis. Is it still accurate in light of the evidence you have now provided? Is all the evidence actually relevant to making the thesis valid? If no, then make appropriate changes to either the thesis or the selection or presentation of evidence. Make sure, yet again, that the relationship of the evidence to the thesis is clear.

Step 6) Present the thesis and the evidence in the format described in Triad Assignment™ #1, which is still available on the web site. The thesis plus evidence should all be on one page.

Step 7) On a second page (or the obverse of page one), convert all of your material into a coherent and well-written paragraph. This will necessitate careful textual modifications and proofreading to ensure smooth and readable prose. The best essays will probably place the thesis at the start of the essay. Page and date references should be retained in the paragraph, using a simple parenthetical style of citation—for example: (Werth, 90). If the author of the words cited or paraphrased are not Werth’s, then clarify—for example: (Lenin in Werth, 91) or (Carr in Werth, 95). Using 1.5-space, the essay should probably take up the better portion of a page.

Criteria: The exam will be excellent if

a) the thesis contains all three of the items in the triad (highlighted in bold) [5 points];
b) the thesis is clear, grammatically correct, and reflective of the reading [10 points];
c) the evidence provided is accurate and relevant to the thesis, and is presented in clear and complete sentences [32 points];
d) at least piece of evidence includes the source and its page number or date [16 points];
e) at least four of the pieces of evidence are from readings; and at least two pieces of evidence come from original sources (everything labeled “document” in the Werth textbook) or from the readings in the Werth textbook (for example Edward Carr on the constitution of the RSFSR) [10 points];
f) the paragraph on the second page is coherent, includes the thesis and evidence from the previous page with page/date references, and exhibits the kind of revision and rewriting necessary to meld individual bullet points into good prose [20 points];
g) and the assignment is printed or typed on clean white paper, using the format of Triad Assignment™ #1 for page one and the essay itself as page 2 [7 points].