

# The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)

# The Legacy of the French Revolution and Napoleon

**Liberalism:** Most of the Enlightenment can fit into this theory. It means maximizing individual human rights. Governments must respect the natural rights of people.

**Nationalism:** A belief that people of similar race, culture, history or religion should be politically unified. It stressed pride in your own group, loyalty and conforming to national goals.

Both of these concepts were well developed in France during the French Revolution

Then, Napoleon's conquests spread these ideas all over Europe

# Why were these ideas so dangerous?

Metternich realized that these ideas would eventually cause the downfall of European Monarchies

Liberalism challenges a king's right to rule. A king could no longer be all powerful.

Nationalism would break apart the Multinational Empires of Europe Austria, Russia and Great Britain all contained multiple nationalities . . . Each of which would want their own country



# Background

- In March of 1814 the Quadruple Alliance between Britain, Austria, Prussia & Russia was created to ensure the defeat of Napoleon.
  - Prussia, Russia and Austria had defeated Napoleon at the battle of the Nations (Oct. 1813)
- Within a month, Paris was occupied, Napoleon was dethroned and the Bourbon monarchy of Louis XVIII was restored.

# Timeline of Events Leading up to Vienna

- Napoleon retreats from Russia (1812)
- Battle of the Nations (1813)
- Quadruple Alliance (March 1814) to take out Napoleon
- Treaty of Chaumont (1<sup>st</sup> Treaty of Paris)
  - Bourbons Restored (decided at Treaty)
  - Napoleon exiled to Elba
  - Napoleons 100 days – escapes from Elba, returns to France to rule (1815)
  - Napoleon's defeat at the battle of Waterloo (June 1815)
- Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)

# The Congress of Vienna

- With the achievement of peace, the European powers began to consider restoring Europe to its pre-revolutionary status.
- The Congress of Vienna was assembled in September 1814, representatives from every European state attended.
- There were even representatives from states that no longer existed, pleading for their restoration.
  - Marks the first time that a meeting of diplomats will assembly in history
- The Congress, however was dominated by the victorious members of the Quadruple Alliance, now known as the “Great Powers” (Russia, Prussia, Austria, GB) - #BIGFOUR

# Goals of the Congress

- Create a balance of power within Europe (restore order)
- Object is NOT to punish France (therefore no reparations)
- Establish a conservative order within Europe
- **Conservatism seeks to create stability within states and between states**
- Diminish Nationalism which threatens existing borders and leadership.
- Diminish Liberalism (end popular government)
- Maintain traditionalism through institutions such as the church
- Re-establish monarchies
- Stability between states could be created through a concert of Europe. Congress system was a non-formal system meant to prevent conflict, revolution
- **Legacy: The Congress System “Concert System” = Collective Security. Leads to League of Nations, NATO and UN**



# The Main Players

- The Main players at the Congress of Vienna were the representatives of the Great Powers:
  - Britain
  - Austria
  - Prussia
  - Russia
  - France
- In their moderation toward France, the allies were motivated by self interests and traditional ideas about the balance of power
- To France, GB and Austria , and their foreign ministers, the balance of power meant an international equilibrium of political and military forces that would discourage aggression by any combination of states, or worse, the domination of Europe by any single state (ie. France).

# Britain - Castlereagh



- Foreign Minister
- Maintain a balance of power
- Maintain colonial and naval superiority
- Keep Russia on the outside of European affairs

British supremacy was not anticipated by any of the great powers, however, between 1814-1914, Britain would be a great power because:

- industrial revolution
- Supremacy at sea-monopoly of Naval power
- No rival left for overseas dominions (Spain, Portugal, France; their empires had been reduced to scraps)

# Austria – Metternich



- Foreign Minister
- Nickname “the Coachman of Europe”
- Maintain a balance of power
- Champions conservatism
- Return to the *Ancien Regime*
- Resist strengthening of Prussia
- Keep Russia on the outside of European affairs

# Prussia - Hardenberg



- Foreign Minister
- Wanted to enlarge Prussia
- Annex Saxony in exchange for Poland
- Raise position of Prussia within Germany

# Russia – Alexander I



- Russian Tsar
- Control Poland
- Constitutional governments in Europe
- International system of collective security

# France - Talleyrand



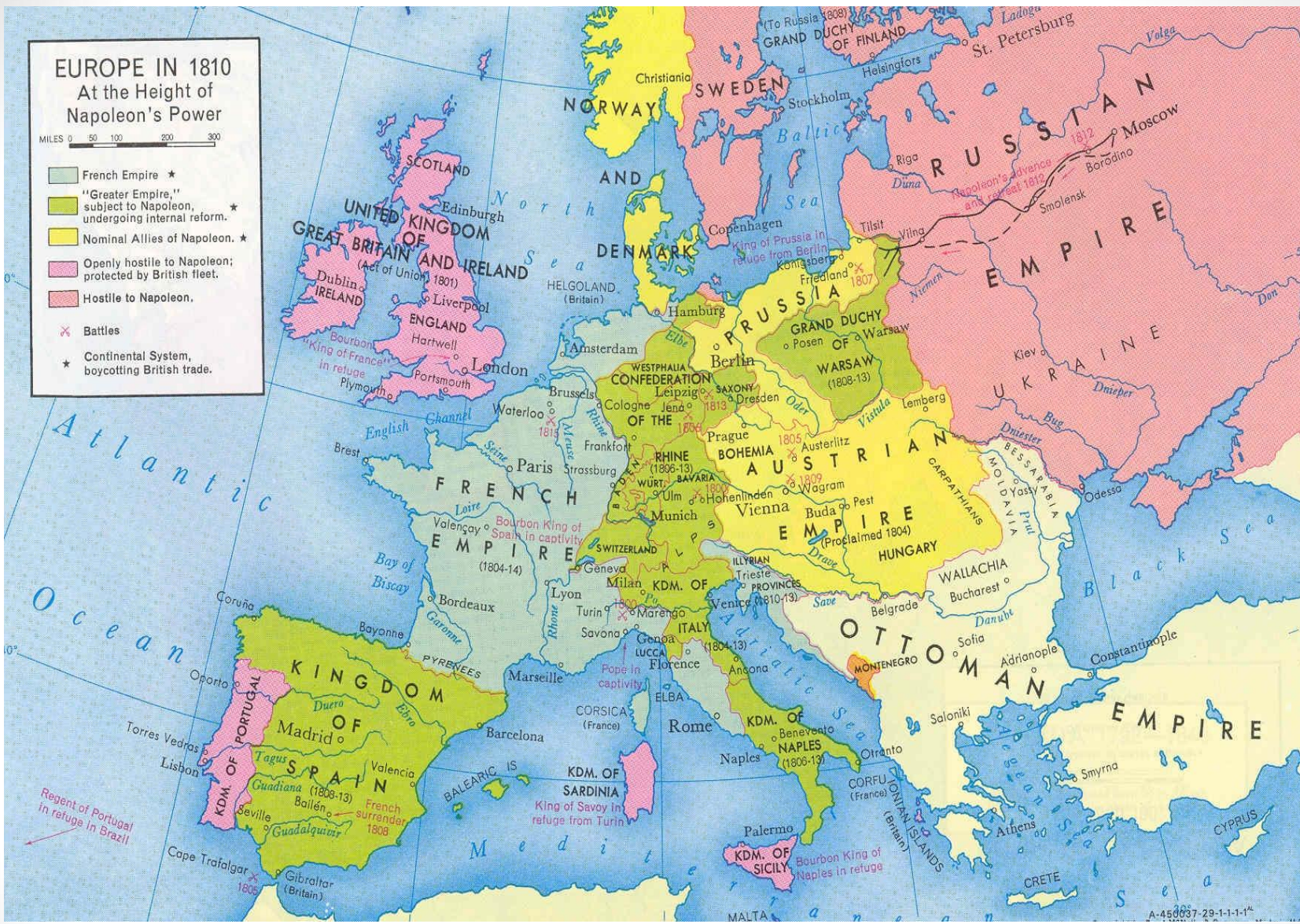
- Foreign Minister
- Wanted to break the diplomatic isolation of France as the defeated threat to Europe
- Weaken the anti-French alliance by any means

# EUROPE IN 1810

## At the Height of Napoleon's Power

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- French Empire \*
- "Greater Empire," subject to Napoleon, undergoing internal reform. \*
- Nominal Allies of Napoleon. \*
- Openly hostile to Napoleon; protected by British fleet.
- Hostile to Napoleon.
- Battles
- Continental System, boycotting British trade.



# Territorial Revisions

- With France as the main threat to peace, the Congress strengthened the territories that bordered France.
- Kingdom of the Netherlands was created by joining the Dutch Republic and Belgium.
- Kingdom of Piedmont was strengthened by adding the Republic of Genoa and Savoy.
- Prussia was given additional territory on the East bank of the Rhine River. It would stand as the 'sentinel on the Rhine'



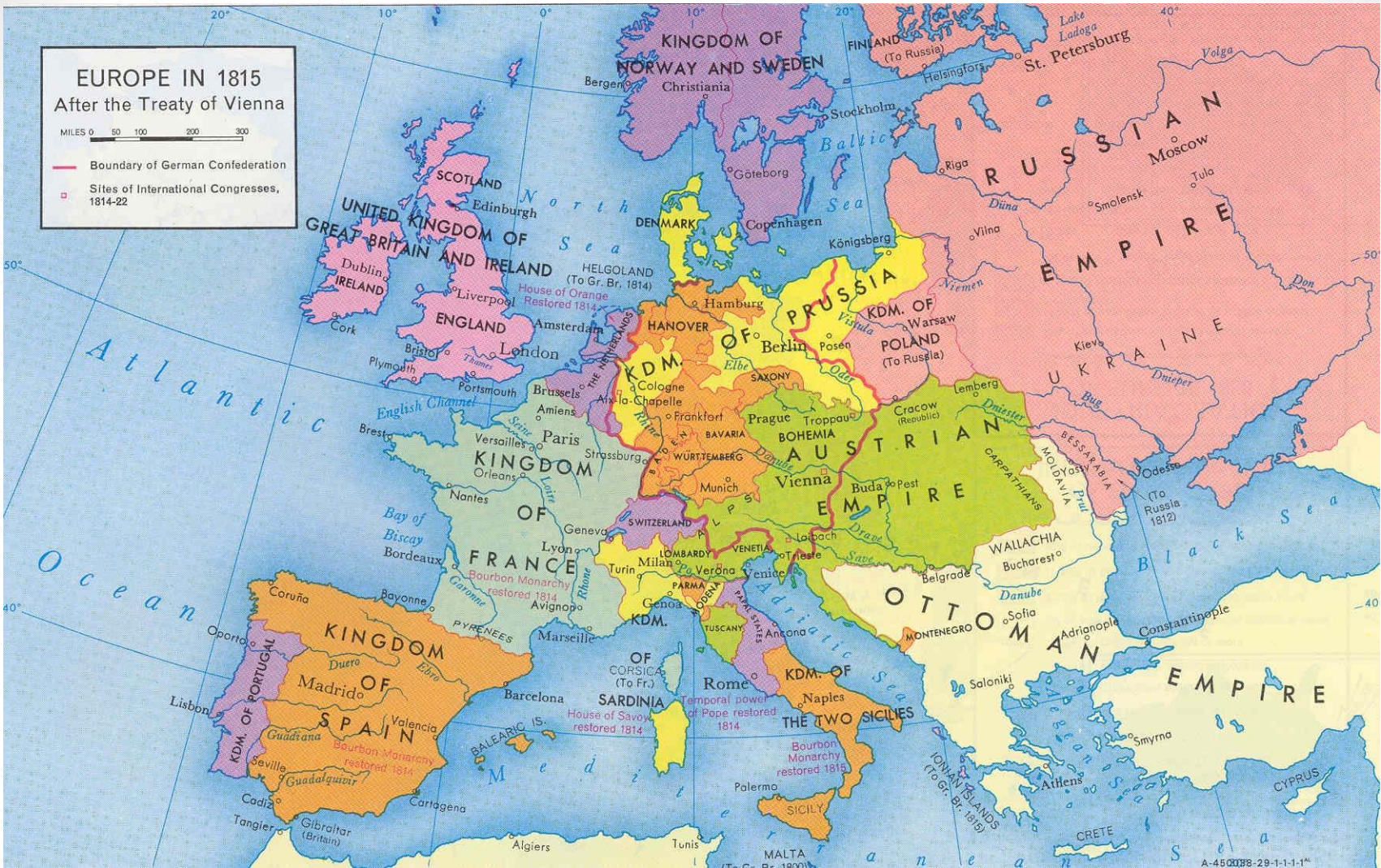
- Austria was given territory in Italy including Venice, Milan and Tuscany.
- The Holy Roman Empire, which Napoleon replaced with the Confederation of the Rhine, was not restored.
- In its place, the Congress created the German Confederation which included Austria, Prussia and 39 other independent states.
- France was stripped of the territories that it annexed after 1790 and returned to the borders as they were before the revolution.

# EUROPE IN 1815

After the Treaty of Vienna

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- Boundary of German Confederation
- Sites of International Congresses, 1814-22



# The Alliance Splits

- The question of Poland created a rift between Russia and Prussia on one side and England and Austria on the other.
- Talleyrand used the rift to end France's isolation by signing a secret treaty with Castlereagh and Metternich to go to war against Russia & Prussia if the need arose.
- The threat of war caused Alexander to compromise by accepting the crown of a reduced Polish kingdom and Prussia getting a part, but not all, of Saxony.

# Napoleon's Hundred Days

- Napoleon's brief return reminded the members of the Quadruple Alliance of the danger still posed by France.
- It acted as a unifying element lasting beyond Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in June 1815.
- By November 1815, Britain, Austria, Prussia & Russia confirmed the Quadruple Alliance, again isolating France, and pledged to hold future congresses to review the political situation and enforce peace in Europe.

# Significance of the Congress

- It established the idea of “Great Powers” which would dominate European diplomacy for the next century
- It was the first attempt to create a system of collective security in Europe (UN, NATO, EU)
- Functioned as a reaction against the liberalism and nationalism of the French Revolution
- Territorial adjustments were made on the basis of the “Balance of Power.
- Prevented a world war for the next 100 years