

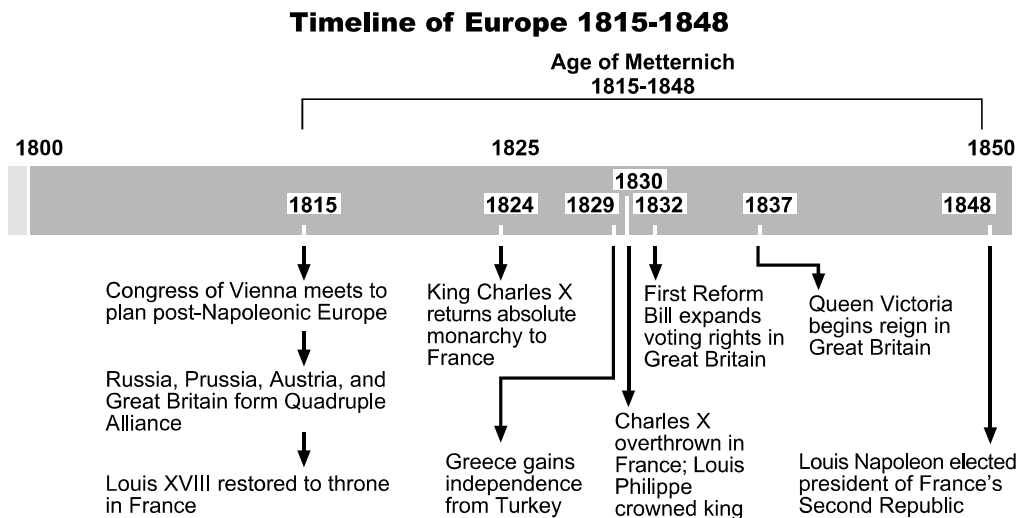
Europe (1815–1848)

The Congress of Vienna: Attempting to Build Peace in Europe



Napoleon

After countries of Europe had united to defeat Napoleon in 1814, they began the task of creating and maintaining peace throughout Europe. To accomplish this goal, the allies who had won the war against Napoleon held a conference in Vienna, Austria, in 1814, called the *Congress of Vienna*. The victorious countries included Italy, Spain, and the group that would come to be known as the *great powers*: Austria, Great Britain, Russia, and Prussia. Shortly after the Congress of Vienna began, Napoleon returned to France and regained his rule as emperor for 100 days. After he was defeated at Waterloo, Belgium, in 1815, the Congress of Vienna resumed.

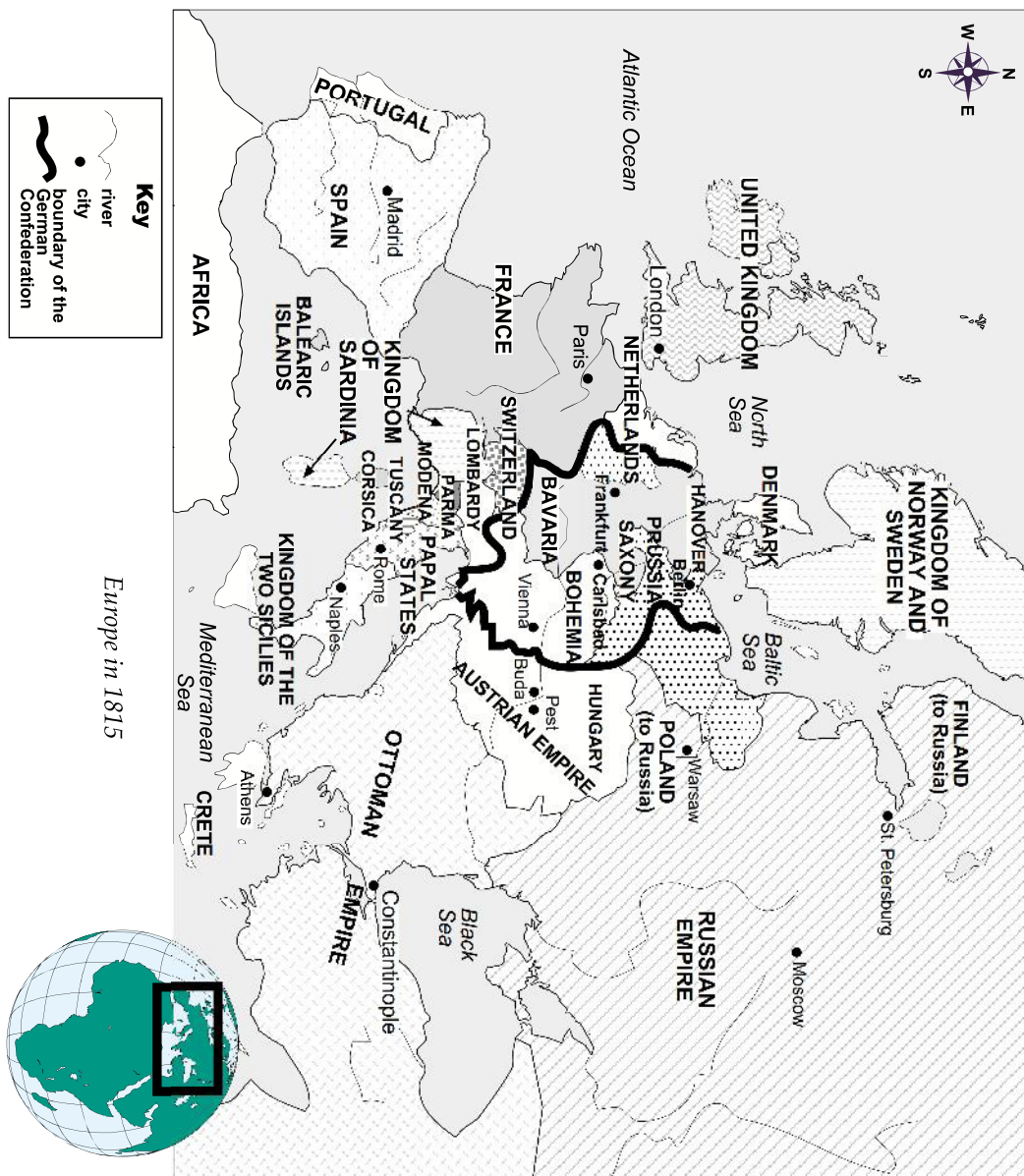


The congress took two steps to **stabilize** Europe. First, it distributed Napoleon's conquests—land the emperor had claimed for France—among the European nations to produce a **balance of power**. No one European country was to be stronger or more powerful than another. Secondly, the congress returned the monarchs to power, restoring the governments and values that had existed before the French Revolution.

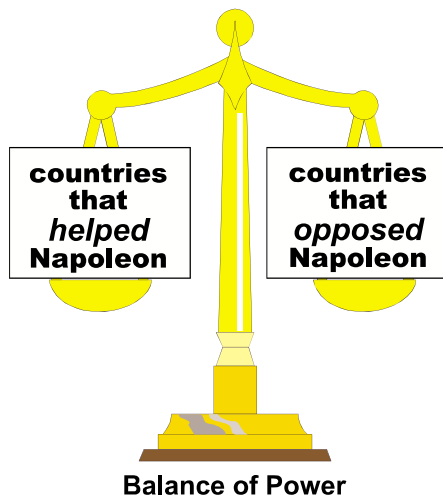
Redrawing the Map of Europe to Produce a Balance of Power

In order to stabilize Europe, the great powers—Austria, Great Britain, Russia, and Prussia—began redistributing the territories Napoleon had

conquered. Their goal was to maintain peace in Europe by strengthening the countries surrounding France. This plan, the great powers believed, would keep France from invading neighboring countries in Europe as it had done during Napoleon's reign.



The great powers also had to make sure that no single country was measurably stronger or weaker than any other European country. If a country were too strong, it might attempt to conquer another country; if a country were too weak, it would be easy prey for a land-hungry neighboring country. In short, the congress wanted to create a balance of power throughout Europe.



In redrawing the map of Europe, the congress took land from those countries that had helped Napoleon and gave land to those countries that had opposed him. For example, Austria gained some of the newly created German Confederation of States, as well as some Italian territories. Poles were placed under Prussian and Russian rule. Unfortunately, the congress paid little attention to the feelings of those people who suddenly found themselves governed by a foreign government. Many of these people began experiencing feelings of **nationalism**, a

desire to regain their self-rule and see their country and culture survive. So although the congress had redrawn the map for peace, it had also planted the seed of future conflict.

Monarchs Restored to Power

The four great powers at the Congress of Vienna were represented by politically shrewd and persuasive leaders. Lord Castlereagh, foreign secretary of Great Britain, gained overseas countries for his country. Czar Alexander I of Russia and King Frederick William III of Prussia expanded their countries' territorial borders. Two other political giants, Prince Klemens von Metternich, chief minister of Austria and chairman of the conference, and Charles Maurice de Talleyrand of France played particularly important roles in the design and future of Europe.

It is rare that a representative of a defeated nation participates in the peace conference that follows. Talleyrand of France is a notable exception. Talleyrand was a noble who had survived both the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon as a respected politician. He helped persuade the conference to restore the Bourbon monarchy in France in the person of

King Louis XVIII. In addition, Talleyrand helped persuade the great powers to restore Bourbon rulers in Italy and Spain.

Without question, however, the most powerful leader at the conference and for 30 years following was Austria's chief minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich. Like Talleyrand, Metternich believed in absolute monarchy and led the Congress of Vienna in restoring monarchs throughout Europe. So dominant a figure was Metternich, that the period 1814-1848 is often called the *Age of Metternich*.

The Age of Metternich

Metternich feared the democratic ideals of the French Revolution. He feared that **liberalism**, or the belief in people's rights and freedoms, would inspire people to carry out revolutions throughout Europe. He and the leaders of the congress were **reactionaries** who wanted to return Europe to the way things were before the French Revolution.

After the map of Europe was redrawn, many Europeans found themselves inhabitants of new countries and ruled by foreign governments. These people reacted to *foreign* rule and began demanding their right to self-rule. In order to **suppress** the spread of liberalism and nationalism inspiring these Europeans to revolt against their governments, Metternich began using secret police to spy on revolutionary groups in his homeland of Austria.

The congress scheduled regular meetings, called the *Concert of Europe*, to solve problems between and among European nations. Metternich, however, used the Concert of Europe to stamp out any individuals or groups supporting **liberal** ideas. Although Russia and Prussia joined Metternich in fighting revolutionary forces in Europe, Great Britain sympathized with people who fought for their right to a representative government. The use of force and secret police to suppress liberalism came to be known as the *Metternich System*.

Events in Europe (1815–1848)

France: Restored Monarchs Eventually Fall

As a result of Talleyrand's skillful **diplomacy** at the Congress of Vienna, France remained an important European power. In fact, by 1818, France became the fifth member of the **Quadruple Alliance**, making it the Quintuple Alliance. However, France's King Louis XVIII inherited a country which had conflicting ideas about the way France should be governed.

Quadruple Alliance

Great Britain	Lord Castlereagh - foreign secretary of Great Britain
Russia	Czar Alexander I of Russia
Prussia	King Frederick William III of Prussia
Austria	Prince Klemens von Metternich - chief minister of Austria
<i>As a result of Charles Maurice de Talleyrand's skillful diplomacy at the congress of Vienna, France became the fifth member, making it the Quintuple Alliance.</i>	

On one hand, *royalists* wanted to turn the clock back to pre-revolutionary France. The royalists favored absolute monarchy. On the other hand, *liberals* (mostly middle-class people) favored keeping the ideas of the revolution alive. They wanted a constitution and a government elected by the people.

Louis XVIII attempted to satisfy both groups. To do so, he developed a **compromise**. He kept many of Napoleon's reforms, such as the Napoleonic Code, a system of law that guaranteed the people many rights. In addition, Louis XVIII kept Napoleon's Bank of France, which was government-supervised, and a state-supported school system. Although the old Bourbon dynasty ruled once more, a Chamber of Deputies now shared some power with Louis XVIII.

In 1824 Louis XVIII died. His brother, Charles X, became king. Unlike Louis XVIII, Charles believed that the king should be an absolute

monarch holding the powers of government in his own hands. He believed that the constitution of France had no authority over his actions.

By 1830 the French people had had enough of the monarch. In July a large mob in Paris forced King Charles X from the throne. In his place, Louis Philippe became king. Louis Philippe was a liberal. He ended censorship and guaranteed citizens trial by jury. He limited the right to vote, however, only to those men who owned property. And many of his policies favored wealthy businessmen. In some ways, Louis Philippe's government was no better than the government of Charles X.

As time went on, French people grew tired of Louis Philippe's government. Prices were rising; wages were falling. He allowed tariffs, or taxes, on imported goods to remain high. These high tariffs helped French manufacturers by making imports more expensive than goods produced at home. Without competition from foreign manufacturers, French manufacturers could charge higher prices for their own goods. Finally, in February 1848, the French **rebelled** and forced Louis Philippe to escape to England.

In December 1848, France once again became a republic. This was the Second French Republic. Louis Napoleon, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, was elected president of France's Second Republic.

Great Britain: Government Reforms Answer People's Demands

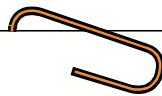
Following years of warfare in Europe and America, British soldiers came home to find Great Britain filled with factories. They saw working men, women, and children living under terrible conditions and earning very little money. They also saw very rich people doing little work, enjoying life, and ignoring the problems of the masses of people. The high price of food kept the poor hungry. And products made in factories in Great Britain were often too expensive for workers to afford. The government and the king, along with the support of the church, did everything possible to help the rich get richer. By 1830 it looked as if Great Britain were ready for revolution.



The wealthy did little work.

Much of Great Britain was also ready to revolt unless they gained representation in Parliament. The British government responded to some of the people's demands and avoided a revolution. Some of the important reforms included the following:

- 1824 British workers were allowed to form unions. By forming unions, workers organized as a group. Unions could accomplish changes that unorganized workers could not.
- 1832 The First Reform Bill gave the middle class the right to vote for members in the House of Commons. It also gave the industrial cities stronger representation in the House of Commons.
- 1833 Slavery was abolished in the British colonies.
- 1833 The Factory Act limited child labor in the textile industry.
- 1846 Parliament ended the Corn Laws, thus reducing the price of bread.



Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce

Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) was a brilliant writer and won first prize at Cambridge University with an essay titled, "Is it right to make men slaves against their wills?" He was asked to read his essay to the University Senate, and on his way home to London, had a spiritual experience that he later described as, "a direct revelation from God ordering me to devote my life to abolishing the trade." Clarkson took this revelation seriously and was given the responsibility of collecting information to support the abolition of the slave trade. This included interviewing 20,000 sailors and obtaining equipment used on the slave-ships such as leg-shackles, thumb screws, and branding irons. In 1787 he published his pamphlet, *A Summary View of the Slave Trade and of the Probable Consequences of Its Abolition*.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was an English reformer who was instrumental in abolishing slavery in the British Empire. He and Thomas Clarkson became leaders of the fight to end the British slave trade. Wilberforce entered Parliament in 1780 and in 1807 passage of his bill for the abolition of the slave trade was passed.

After the passage of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807, Clarkson published his book *History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade*. Clarkson was not satisfied with the measures passed by Parliament and helped found the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery. In 1833, largely through William Wilberforce's efforts, slavery was abolished throughout the empire.

Wilberforce and Clarkson wanted all countries to end slave trading. They convinced the British government to demand this at the Congress of Vienna. In 1815 the British government persuaded the other countries in the Congress of Vienna to end slave trade. Within a few years after the Congress of Vienna meeting, *all* European nations stopped the slave trade, ending the practice of trading human beings as slaves.

These reforms and others could not have been passed without help from King William IV. He came to the throne in 1830, following George IV. While George IV had been a *reactionary* who favored the rich, William IV was more liberal. Because kings and queens in Great Britain could appoint members to the House of Lords, William IV helped the reform acts become law by appointing enough men who would vote for the reform acts.

The Victorian Age

In 1837 William IV died. Since William had no children, the British crown was offered to his niece, Victoria. Victoria became queen of Great Britain at the age of 18. Queen Victoria supported government by the people. She was a popular monarch because of her strong beliefs about proper behavior. Under her reign the monarchy was respected and loved. Victoria remained queen for 64 years. Not since the reign of Elizabeth I had Great Britain enjoyed the greatness they were to enjoy under Victoria's reign as queen.



Queen Victoria

Austria and the German States: Metternich Loses Power

By agreement at the Congress of Vienna, Austria was given control over the German states. The German states were formed into a **confederation** of 39 states, including Prussia.

As the most powerful person in Austria, Metternich controlled the German Confederation as well. Metternich's system of government was harsh. He favored strict laws to control the people.

Metternich's system was successful because he had the support of the army. It also worked because the small states within the German Confederation were unable to unite against Metternich's system.

In 1848 however, the Metternich system began to fall apart. Once again, it was the revolt in France which gave the people of Austria and Germany the courage to revolt. The frustrations of the working-class people and conflicting ideas of the various national groups within Austria and Germany led to revolts and uprisings. These revolting groups included Czechs, Hungarians, and other Slavic people. They were tired of being ruled by outsiders.

Although the revolution of 1848 in Austria and the German Confederation were not successful, it did play a very important role in the future of Europe. Listed below are important changes in the people and governments of Austria and the German Confederation.

- Metternich resigned. This left the emperor without a person who was wise enough to control the different groups within the empire.
- Prussia became the most powerful state in Germany. Prussian ideas and values dominated the German Confederation.
- The Austrian government put down the various nationalistic revolts in its empire. The revolutionaries, however, only grew more and more angry at the Austrian emperor. They continued to work towards revolution.
- The new emperor in Austria was Francis Joseph. He ruled until 1916, presiding over an empire that would break up during World War I.

Russia: A New Major Power

Russia's Czar Alexander I played an important role in European affairs after the defeat of Napoleon. At the Congress of Vienna, he had two major goals. The first was to make Russia one of the major powers in Europe. The second was to get a warm-water port for Russia.

Russia did very well at the Congress of Vienna. Alexander I achieved both of his goals. The great powers treated Russia as a major power. When the great powers agreed to let Russia take control of Poland, Alexander I gained a warm-water port. Alexander's idea of an alliance among the major European powers was accepted as well. The alliance was called the *Quadruple Alliance*. The four countries in the alliance were Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain (and later France). The Quadruple Alliance was given the task of keeping France in line after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. Since the four countries really did not trust one another, they did not work as an alliance. Like most Russian leaders before him, and all Russian leaders after, Alexander I did not trust the Western European countries.

Even though Alexander I had talked about reforms at the Congress of Vienna, he ruled Russia harshly, in the tradition of the czars before him. He feared that the people of Russia might get ideas about revolting. During the revolutionary period from 1830 to 1848, Russia helped to crush revolutions in Eastern Europe and Poland.

Spain and Portugal: Revolutions Fail

From 1815 to 1848, Spain and Portugal were once again ruled by cruel kings. These kings were supported by the Quadruple Alliance. (Great Britain, however, did not participate in stopping revolts beyond its boundaries.) The people tried, but failed, to overturn their governments. Nobles and clergy were given back all of the land and power they had lost during Napoleon's reign.

Italy: The Rise of Foreign Powers

After Napoleon was defeated, Italy came under the rule of foreign powers. Austria controlled politics in Italy. The people in the various Italian-States wanted **unification** and freedom from foreign governments. When these groups attempted a revolution in 1848, Austria suppressed them successfully.

Greece: A Successful Revolution

In 1821 Greeks began revolting against the Turks. With aid from Britain, France, and Russia, the Greeks defeated the Turks in 1830. The Greek Revolution was important for two reasons. First, it gave Greeks independence. Second, it showed that the European powers could put their reactionary ideas aside and help a country gain its independence. Liberals were happy, and nationalists everywhere hoped that they, too, could have a country of their own.

Review

After the defeat of Napoleon, the victorious countries met in 1815 in the Congress of Vienna to stabilize Europe. The great powers—Austria, Great Britain, Russia, and Prussia—distributed land Napoleon had conquered to establish a balance of power. During his reign, Napoleon had forced many monarchs in Europe from power. After the great powers had defeated him, they returned Europe to a time when a *few* had ruled *many*. Monarchies were returned to power in many European countries. This period from 1815 to 1848 was characterized by the reactionary policies of Metternich.

In many countries, the people revolted against the return of monarchs and the loss of many rights and freedoms. Although most of the revolutions failed, the common people did not give up their revolutionary ideas. In their efforts at the Congress of Vienna to remake Europe like it had been before the French Revolution, the countries of the Quadruple Alliance had actually created a situation in Europe that would lead first to revolution and eventually to World War I.