European History/Napoleon Bonaparte and the Rise of Nationalism

European History
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Introduction

In an attempt to prevent freely elected royalists from taking control of the Directory in 1799, members of the bourgeois sent Napoleon Bonaparte and his army to defend the Directory and the annulment of the elections. However, Napoleon took advantage of this situation and in the Coup of Brumaire took control of the nation.

The Consulate 1799-1804

Napoleon seized control and initially installed an enlightened despotism known as the Consulate. During this time, Napoleon instituted a number of important Enlightened reforms. The most important of these is his Napoleonic Code, which provided freedom of religion, a uniform law, social and property rights, and the end of feudal dues. He also implemented a state-wide compulsory education, known as the University of France. In 1801 he ended dechristianization.
The Empire 1804-1814

Napoleon declared himself French Emperor and became a military dictator. Napoleon was undefeated against his three main continental enemies, defeating Austria, Russia, and Prussia multiple times. During his tenure, he took control of large amounts of mainland Europe. However, Napoleon failed to subdue England, and was defeated in his attempt to crush the English Navy at the Battle of Trafalgar by Admiral Nelson. As a result, Napoleon employed the Continental System, a method of economic warfare. He prohibited trade with the British by blockading all coasts of Europe from English export. Unfortunately for Napoleon, this failed, as the British still were able to smuggle goods into Europe, and were also able to trade with their colonies, Asia, and the United States. Napoleon eliminated the Holy Roman Empire, and in 1806 consolidated it into 40 states and named it the Confederation of the Rhine.

After Alexander I of Russia withdrew from the Continental System, Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. For the first time, Napoleon failed, as the Russian army employed scorched earth tactics to defeat Napoleon's army. However, Napoleon quickly raised a new army, but this army was crushed by the Quadruple Alliance of England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia at the Battle of Nations/Leipzig in 1813. Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba, but he managed to escape and return in 1815 in a period known as the Hundred Days. The Quadruple Alliance again crushed his new army at the Battle of Waterloo, led by the great British General Wolsey (Duke of Wellington). Napoleon was then exiled to the island of Saint Helena where he died in 1821.

The Congress of Vienna 1814-1815

The Quadruple Alliance assembled at the Congress of Vienna to create a post-Napoleonic Europe. Their representatives were Castlereagh of England, who assembled the Quadruple Alliance, Talleyrand of France, Metternich of Austria, and Alexander I of Russia.

The Congress of Vienna was incredibly lenient toward France. It simply restored the old boundaries and restored Louis XVIII to the throne. It imposed no reparations. This was done because the allies desired a stable, prosperous France that would not threaten them with revolution or invasion.

The Restoration of Louis XVIII Bourbon

Louis XVIII did not wipe out the gains of the Revolution. Rather, out of fear of revolution, he signed the Charter of 1814 that provided legal equality, offices open to all men, a two chamber parliament, Napoleonic civil code, and the abolition of feudalism.

A Shift in Foreign Policy

After the fall of Napoleon, European foreign policy had taken a major shift. While preserving the balance of power was still important, now much more prominently featured in war would be advocates of liberalism (revolutionaries, republicans, nationalists) versus conservatism or the "Old Regime" (the monarchy, aristocrats, clergymen).
Old Regime monarchs, led by Klemens Wenzel von Metternich of Austria, used the Congress System, also known as the Concert of Europe, to prevent revolution and war. At the Congress System the leading of nations of Europe worked together to prevent the outbreak of revolution in each nation.

**A New Nationalism**

Many of the territories occupied by Napoleon during his Empire began to feel a new sense of nationalism. During the occupation, Napoleon destroyed and disallowed many nation's individual cultures, and the people of these nations greatly resented this. As a result, Napoleon's conquests spurred a new nationalism in the occupied nations, particularly in Germany and Italy, at a level that had never previously existed.
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