Historical Council

Restoring peace and order in Europe after the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars

FAMUN

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Introducing Your Chairs

Hey, my name is Niels. I was supposed to quit MUN's after LMUNA in October, however, our SG reached out to me and brought to my attention that I **had** to end the career where it started. That's why I'll be ending my 8+ year long career of attending conferences by being your chair during FAMUN.
I'm a 19 year old software developer, currently doing a full-time internship and am working on developing my own company. I'm greatly looking forward to seeing how every one of you will think of ways to spice up the debates and go wildly off topic. See you at FAMUN!

Hello, my name is Lorenzo and I will be your deputy chair for the second half of the conference. I am 16 years old and am studying at the British School in The Netherlands. This will be my ninth conference, but my first time here at FAMUN. I am Italian, however I was born here. I'll be looking forward to meeting you all at the conference!

Note From The Chairs

This committee will be debating as if we are the Congress of Vienna in the year 1814, with the Congress just starting. The entire research report, however, was written with the view and knowledge of the 21st century, meaning the report will describe events such as Congress to have happened already. This is simply to inform you about the background of the topic.
Seeing as everything has already played out, we would be very happy to see the debate take a route that isn't a plain copy of what actually happened.
With that being said, everything is up to your own discretion and we wish you a good read and a nice debate. Should you want to prove having read the report to us, or just want to join the whatsapp group, you'll find a link right here.

An Introduction To The Topic

The Great French War.

The French Revolution was a tipping point in not just French, but also European and world history. With 97% of the French civilians being in the bottom part of the **Estate System**, the immense gap between them and the top brass, the lack of representation when voting and the high tax rates, the Third Estate grew disenchanted with their current position. Aiming to become more equal, the French set out to overthrow the unfair systems they were involuntarily part of. The Revolution ended up running from 1789 until 1799, ending with Napoleon rising to power as the First Consul.

Napoleon Bonaparte was a military and political leader whose name reached the history books because of his endeavours during the French Revolution, as well as his role in the growth of French influence. In the early years of the Revolution, Bonaparte grew in both military and political prowess and was rapidly becoming more and more popular with the French public.

10 years after the start of the Revolution, Napoleon staged a **Coup d'État** and managed to overthrow the French Government, establishing himself as First Consul. After rising to power in 1799, he consolidated and declared himself *Emperor of the French*. This, however, was only the start of Napoleon's undertakings.

After the Revolution, which ended in 1799 when the government was overthrown, Napoleon went on to engage in a vast military campaign that resulted in what we now call the **Napoleonic Wars**.

After being in a state of relative disarray for over three decades due to Napoleon's warmongering, the Congress of Vienna is now faced with the issue of restoring peace.

Definition of Key Terms

Estate System:
In 1789, the French estate system comprised three classes: the First Estate (clergy), the Second Estate (nobility), and the Third Estate (commoners). The First and Second Estates enjoyed privileges and exemptions, while the Third Estate faced economic hardships and bore the brunt of taxation. This imbalance contributed to social unrest and played a significant role in the lead-up to the French Revolution.

Coup d'État:
A coup d'État refers to the sudden and often violent overthrow of a government, typically carried out by a faction within the existing power structure. In the context of the French Revolution, the most notable coup d'État was on 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799), when Napoleon Bonaparte, along with political allies, orchestrated the overthrow of the Directory, establishing himself as the First Consul of France. This event marked a crucial turning point in French history and set the stage for Napoleon's rise to power.

Nationalism:
Nationalism is a political and social ideology centered around the idea of a shared national identity, culture, history, and often a desire for self-governance or sovereignty.

Liberalism:
Liberalism is a political and philosophical ideology that emphasizes individual liberties, equality, and the protection of individual rights.

Coalition:
An alliance or union between countries for some temporary and specific reason

Congress:
A formal meeting or series of meetings for discussion between delegates

Conservative:
Averse to change or innovation and holding traditional values

A General Overview of the Issue

After the revolution and the wars, the risings of both **nationalism** and **liberalism** played a significant role in the 19th century.
The continent was in disarray, the people in power were questioned and the countries were still trying to process the aftereffects of Napoleon's undertakings. Restoring the balance and peace, in whatever way would now be possible, meant fixing several things.

Restoring the Monarchies

During the **Napoleonic Era**, Bonaparte went on to seize control of not only France but also Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and most of Western Germany and Northern Italy. These monarchies had to be restored in order for the world's powers to be balanced again.

Compensation of Major Powers

With territory, power and anything else being up for grabs, the major powers of the continent and the world sought to benefit from the situation. With every party involved refusing to simply step down, peace would not be achieved without properly compensating the powers who could, or think they could, benefit from the chaos.

Territorial Changes

With the existing borders of countries being skirted due to the occupation of countries by France, these lines had to be redrawn. Like the previous topic, governments were looking to gain and would not give up chances easily. This meant that a lot of time and effort had to be put into the mediation of these negotiations.

Suppression of Revolutionary Ideas

With the populace having seen the possibility of gain and freedom, civilians all over the continent were now starting to grow liberal. The **Congress** working to improve the situation felt these ideas would not be beneficial to the progress and therefore decided to work towards suppressing revolutionary thoughts and ideas within the populations.

Historical Background

French Revolution (1789-1799)

The French Revolution is considered by several historians as one of the most important turning points in European history. It led to the spread of revolutionary ideas such as liberty, equality, and fraternity throughout the continent and abolished the feudal system, which was in place in several European countries at the time.

There were several reasons as to why the French Revolution happened, however one that is often considered to be the most important cause is the widespread divide between classes throughout the country. The Third Estate, (the lowest one), covered 97% of the French population, and ranged from the poorest peasants to wealthy merchants. They were underrepresented when voting and suffered the most from the taxes throughout the country.

This led the Third Estate to start a revolution, with the goal to radically change the political system in the country, and to promote the aforementioned ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The revolution ended up being successful, with the decapitation of the King and Queen and the introduction of new social and economic reforms. The French Revolution also led to the rise of Napoleon as emperor of France.

French Revolutionary Wars (1792-c.1802)

The French Revolutionary Wars were a series of conflicts between France and several other European monarchies.

The new revolutionary government was originally defensive, however, it gradually started becoming aggressive due to the belief that the revolution only truly succeeded if the ideas spread.

Several European countries made **coalitions** against the aggressive French, and these wars led to the rise of several notable figures, such as Napoleon Bonaparte.

The conflict ended with the Treaty of Amiens, signed by Britain, France, Spain, and the Batavian Republic (The Netherlands), which brought a brief period of peace and the dissolution of the Second Coalition.

Napoleonic Wars (c.1803-1815)

The Napoleonic Wars are often seen as a continuation of the French Revolutionary Wars, they were again a series of conflicts which engaged numerous European nations, who often, once again, formed coalitions in an attempt to finally defeat Napoleon and his army.

At first, Napoleon saw great success, taking many important early victories in battles such as the one at Austerlitz, where, despite being outnumbered, he managed to defeat the Russian and Austrian armies, which brought an end to the Third Coalition. These victories and territorial gains by the French Empire led to the spread of revolutionary ideas throughout the continent, and eventually the world.

Eventually, Napoleon's success started coming to an end. It is generally accepted that the failure of the invasion of Russia in 1812 was the beginning of Napoleon's downfall. This defeat exposed the French's vulnerability and subsequently led to more losses.

After the allies captured Paris Napoleon's marshals and ministers convinced him that he needed to abdicate. He was given sovereignty over the island of Elba and was exiled to the island.

The defeat of the French Empire in 1814 by the sixth coalition led to the beginning of the **Congress** of Vienna, where European nations gathered to discuss how to maintain peace and stability throughout the continent.

Major Parties Involved

Russia

Russia was a country that frequently joined coalitions against Napoleon and was a key player in his defeat. An important victory of theirs is the defeat of the French army in the Russian invasion of 1812. In the Congress of Vienna, Russia gained large parts of the Duchy of Warsaw (Poland), and retained Finland, which was annexed from Sweden in 1809.

Great Britain

Great Britain also had a pivotal role in the defeat of Napoleon, especially during the Peninsular War on the Iberian Peninsula, where the British led many soldiers to defeat Napoleon's army. For its role in the defeat of Napoleon, Britain gained several colonies, such as Malta and the Cape of Good Hope.

France

France was the country who sparked these conflicts. Despite ultimately having been defeated, it succeeded at its goal, to a certain extent, as it spread its revolutionary ideas to the world. After the war, France lost all its territorial conquests from the Napoleonic Wars and returned to its 1789 borders. Additionally, it returned to having a monarchy, with the Bourbon family returning to power.

Prussia

Prussia played a major role in defeating Napoleon too. At the Congress of Vienna it gained some German states in the west, Swedish Pomerania, and 40% of the Kingdom of Saxony.

Austria

Austria was another nation that aided in defeating Napoleon, and it hosted the resulting Congress of Vienna. It relinquished its claim on The Netherlands, allowing it to make its own kingdom, however, it also made territorial gains, such as the acquisition of Lombardy-Venetia.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue
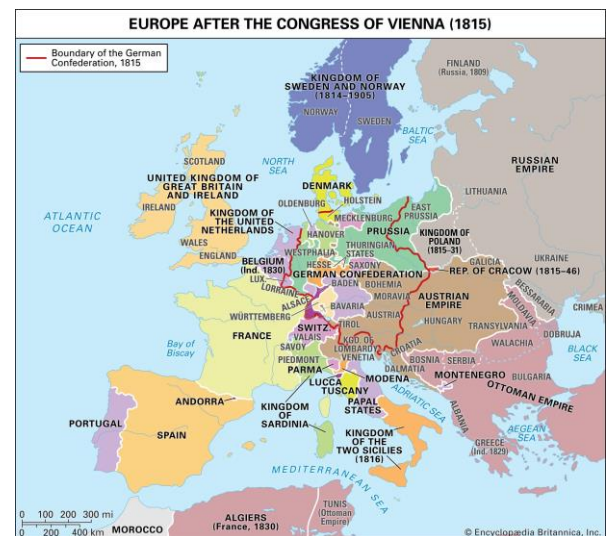
Congress of Vienna

The Congress of Vienna was an important diplomatic event in which European nations met in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars to discuss ways to ensure peace and stability among each other. It brought the most comprehensive treaty Europe had ever seen.

Member states were in agreement that restoring monarchies was the best course of action with the hope that former monarchs could stabilise political relations. Additionally a **conservative** order was applied in an attempt to minimise the chance of revolutionary ideas spreading.

Further, nations wanted to bring across a balance of power in the continent, which essentially is the attempt to ensure that military strength is equally distributed among all the nations so that there is no dominant power. The term "Concert of Europe" was adopted to describe the process that attempted to maintain an equal balance of power throughout the continent.

Another thing that the Congress of Vienna did was make territorial changes, allowing some nations to gain land, and others to lose some. This, again, was an attempt to make sure that the main powers could balance each other to stay at peace. The main territorial changes are described in the "Major Parties Involved" section above, and the new borders are illustrated below.

Interestingly, France did not lose significant amounts of territory but instead just returned to the borders that were in place in 1789, when the old monarchy still ruled France. There were several reasons for this: one being the attempt of returning territories to their legitimate owners, which in this case were the Bourbons. A second reason was, once again, to maintain the aforementioned balance of power. France was meant to be an important military state, equal to empires such as Austria and Russia.

EUROPE AFTER THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA (1815)

Possible Solutions For The Issue

Forming a Supranational Union

One possible way to restore peace and stability in Europe was by establishing an international organisation, which, while naturally not being as involved in a country's actions as it is in the 21st century, would give nations the opportunity to express their concerns in meetings which would be held on a regular basis.

This could help minimise the chance of hostilities between nations and increase collaboration among states.

Making States Depend on One Another

Ensuring that member states rely on each other for certain resources could disincentivise them from behaving aggressively. This is because the goods provided are essential, and the disruption of the supply chain, due to a rise in hostilities, could harm a nation.

Timeline Of Key Events

August 15th, 1769	Napoleon is born
July 14th, 1789	Storming of the Bastille, French Revolution reaches its first climax
April 20th, 1792	France declares war on Austria
January 21st, 1793	Louis XVI, French king, is decapitated
March 27th, 1802	Treaty of Amiens is rendered effective
May 18th, 1803	United Kingdom declared war on France
December 2nd, 1805	Battle of Austerlitz
December, 1812	French invasion of Russia fails
March 31st, 1814	The Sixth Coalition captures Paris
April, 1814	Napoleon is exiled to Elba
March 20th, 1815	Napoleon returns to Paris
June 18th, 1915	Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon finally defeated
1814 - 1815	Congress of Vienna

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- Use APA Format!
- Optional: *Further Reading*

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