

RISE OF NAPOLEON AND FALL OF THE EMPIRE

Napoleon seized power by November 1799. The son of a noble, Napoleon attended an elite military training college in Paris. Throughout his military career, he was promoted in part to his victories in battle, inspiring dispirited soldiers and reorganizing the French Army to further victory. Despite a few losses, when returning to Paris in 1799 in response to the crisis inflicting France, he seized control by means of a coup d'état. The French Revolution ended when Napoleon took control of the government. The people of France had had enough of the corruption and mismanagement of the Directory that they were willing to return to a form of monarchy. After a new constitution was implemented and Napoleon becoming First Consul of France, in 1804 he later crowned himself Emperor of France.

Both Napoleon's appointment as First Consul of France and his coronation were put to the French People by a vote. Given the crises and turmoil French citizens had lived through the revolution, they looked to a strong leader that could help them moved forward. However, many of the European Monarchies (Austria and Britain) who were not supporters of the revolution did not like Napoleon and were exceedingly critical of the new emperor of France.

"Frenchmen without a doubt, you will see in what I did that I am a soldier who supports liberty and am a citizen who is devoted to the republic."

-From a translation of the "official" version of the coup issued throughout France.



**Another version of the coup by an English artist.
The caption reads: The Corsican Crocodile abolishes the Council of Frogs.**

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After Napoleon Bonaparte seized control in France in 1799, he went on to expand his power across the continent. By 1812, he controlled much of Europe. However, many of the conquered lands rumbled with **nationalism**—loyalty to their own nations above all. Nationalists rose to throw off Napoleonic rule. As a result, Napoleon suffered a series of significant military defeats from 1812 to 1815, when his empire came to an end at the **Battle of Waterloo**.

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA, 1814–1815

What and Why: A series of international meetings to secure peace across Europe.

Who: King Frederick William III of Prussia, Czar Alexander I of Russia, Emperor Francis I of Austria; foreign ministers from Britain and France; and, most importantly, **Klemens von Metternich**, foreign minister of Austria.

- Countries around France were made stronger to **weaken France** and provide a **balance of power** across Europe.
- **Monarchies** that had been dethroned under Napoleon were **restored** and their **legitimacy**—hereditary right to rule—was proclaimed in France and elsewhere.



CONCERT OF EUROPE, C. 1820–1853

What and Why: An international alliance that met when peacekeeping issues arose.

Who: the “Holy Alliance” of the **leaders of Russia, Austria, and Prussia**, led by Klemens von Metternich.

- Royal rulers **promised to help each other in the event of revolution**.

REVOLUTIONS OF 1848

What and Why: Uprisings for self-government in France, the Austrian Empire, and the German and Italian states

Who: **Nationalists** who claimed loyalty to their fellow people rather than royal rulers

- Nationalists wanted **nation-states**—national governments that are independent from royal rule and serve the people and their ideals.
- Nationalists believed they would be united by their shared history, culture, and land rather than by any one ruler.
- The uprisings were quickly repressed, but their ideals persisted; within 20 years nationalist movements had turned the scattered states of **Germany and Italy** into two new, unified nation-states.