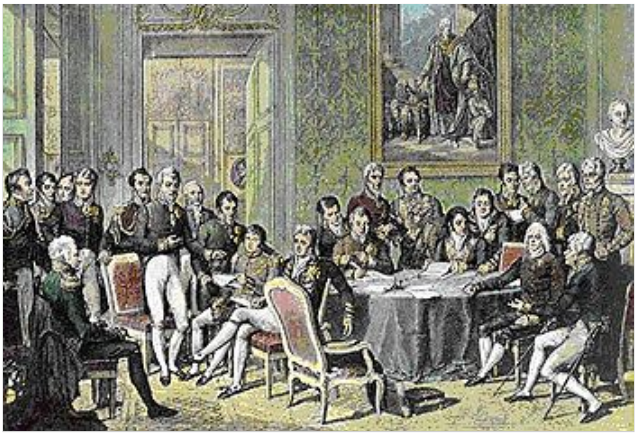
Congress of Vienna

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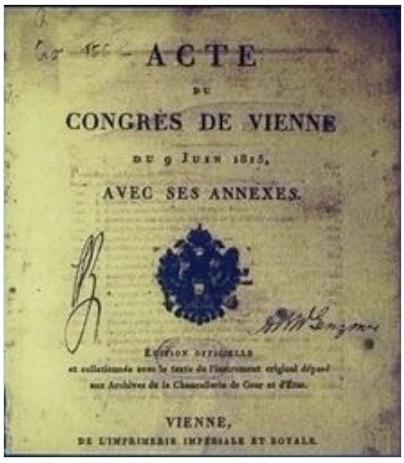
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The **Congress of Vienna** (*German: Wiener Kongress*) was a conference of ambassadors of European states chaired by Klemens Wenzel von Metternich, and held in Vienna from September, 1814 to June, 1815.[1] The objective of the Congress was to settle the many issues arising from the French Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars, and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. This objective resulted in the redrawing of the continent's political map, establishing the boundaries of France, the Duchy of Warsaw, the Netherlands, the states of the Rhine, the German province of Saxony, and various Italian territories, and the creation of spheres of influence through which Austria, Britain, France and Russia brokered local and regional problems. The Congress of Vienna was the first of a series of international meetings that came to be known as the Concert of Europe, which was an attempt to forge a peaceful balance of power in Europe, and served as a model for later organizations such as the League of Nations and United Nations.



The Congress of Vienna by Jean-Baptiste Isabey, (1819). Although representatives from all the states which had participated in the wars were invited, the principal negotiations were conducted by the "Big Four" (Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria) and, later on, royalist France.

The immediate background was Napoleonic France's defeat and surrender in May 1814, which brought an end to twenty-five years of nearly continuous war. Negotiations continued despite the outbreak of fighting triggered by Napoleon's dramatic return from exile and resumption of power in France during the Hundred Days of March–July, 1815. The Congress's "Final Act" was signed nine days before his final defeat at Waterloo on 18 June 1815.



Frontispiece of the Acts of the Congress of Vienna

In a technical sense, the "Congress of Vienna" was not properly a Congress: it never met in plenary session, and most of the discussions occurred in informal, face-to-face, sessions among the Great Powers of Austria, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and sometimes Prussia, with limited or no participation by other delegates. On the other hand, the Congress was the first occasion in history where, on a continental scale, national representatives came together to formulate treaties, instead of relying mostly on messengers and messages between the several capitals. The Congress of Vienna settlement, despite later changes, formed the framework for European international politics until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Contents

- 1 Preliminaries
- 2 Participants
- 3 Course of the Congress
- 4 Final Act
  - 4.1 Polish-Saxon crisis
  - 4.2 Other changes
- 5 Later criticism
- 6 See also
- 7 References
- 8 Further reading
- 9 External links

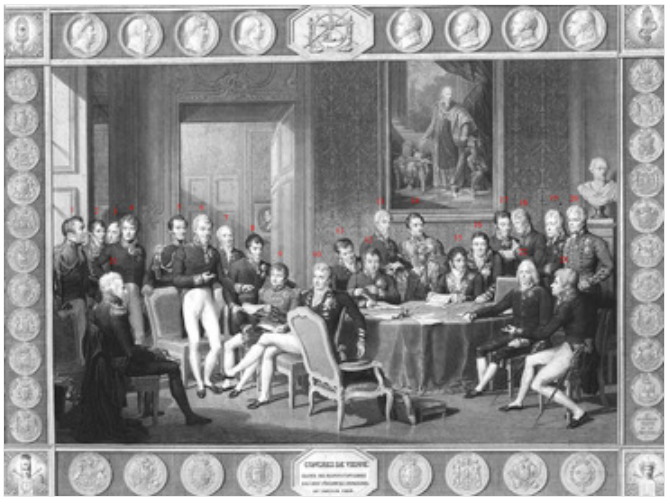
Preliminaries

Partial settlements had already occurred at the Treaty of Paris between France and the Sixth Coalition, and the Treaty of Kiel which covered issues raised regarding Scandinavia. The Treaty of Paris had determined that a "general congress" should be held in Vienna, and that invitations would be issued to "all the Powers engaged on either side in the present war."[2] The opening was scheduled for July 1814.[3]

Participants

The Four Great Powers and Bourbon France
The Four Great Powers had previously formed the core of the Sixth Coalition. In the verge of Napoleon's defeat they had outlined their common position in the Treaty of Chaumont (March 1814), and negotiated the Treaty of Paris (1814) with the Bourbons during their restoration:

- Austria was represented by Prince Metternich, the Foreign Minister, and by his deputy, Baron Johann von Wessenberg. Given the Congress's sessions were in Vienna, Emperor Francis was kept closely informed.
- The United Kingdom was represented first by its Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh; then by the Duke of Wellington, after Castlereagh's return to England in February 1815; and in the last weeks, by the Earl of Clancarty, after Wellington left to face Napoleon during the Hundred Days.
- Although Russia's official delegation was led by the foreign minister, Count Karl Robert Nesselrode, Tsar Alexander I was also in Vienna and regarded himself – in fact as well as in name – its own sole plenipotentiary.[4]
- Prussia was represented by Prince Karl August von Hardenberg, the Chancellor, and the diplomat and scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt. King Frederick William III of Prussia was also in Vienna, playing his role behind the scenes.
- France, the "fifth" power, was represented by her foreign minister, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord as well as the Minister Plenipotentiary the Duke of Dalberg. Talleyrand had already negotiated the Treaty of Paris (1814) for Louis XVIII of France; the king, however, distrusted him and was also secretly negotiating with Metternich, by mail.[5]



1. Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington
2. Joaquim Lobo da Silveira
3. António de Saldanha da Gama
4. Count Carl Löwenhielm
5. Jean-Louis-Paul-François, 5th Duke of Noailles
6. Klemens Wenzel, Prince von Metternich
7. André Dupin
8. Count Karl Robert Nesselrode
9. Pedro de Sousa Holstein, Count of Palmela
10. Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh
11. Emmerich Joseph, Duke of Dalberg
12. Baron Johann von Wessenberg
13. Prince Andrey Kirillovich Razumovsky
14. Charles Vane, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry
15. Pedro Gómez Labrador, Marquis of Labrador
16. Richard Le Poer Trench, 2nd Earl of Clancarty
17. Wacken (Recorder)
18. Friedrich von Gentz (Congress Secretary)
19. Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt
20. William Cathcart, 1st Earl Cathcart
21. Prince Karl August von Hardenberg
22. Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord
23. Count Gustav Ernst von Stackelberg

The four other signatories of the Treaty of Paris, 1814
These parties had not been part of the Chaumont agreement, but had joined the Treaty of Paris (1814):

- Spain – Marquis Pedro Gómez de Labrador
- United Kingdon of Portugal,Brazil and Algarves – Plenipotentiaries: Pedro de Sousa Holstein, Count of Palmella; António de Saldanha da Gama; Joaquim Lobo da Silveira.[6][7]
- Sweden and Norway – Count Carl Löwenhielm
- Republic of Genoa – Marquise Agostino Pareto, Senator of the Republic

Others

- Denmark – Count Niels Rosenkrantz, foreign minister.[8] King Frederick VI was also present in Vienna.
- The Netherlands – Earl of Clancarty, the British Ambassador at the Dutch court,[9][10] and Baron Hans von Gagern[11]
- Switzerland – Every canton had its own delegation. Charles Pictet de Rochemont from Geneva played a prominent role.[12]
- The Papal States – Cardinal Ercole Consalvi[13]
- On German issues,
  - Bavaria – Maximilian Graf von Montgelas
  - Württemberg – Georg Ernst Levin Graf von Wintzingerode
  - Hanover, then in a personal union with the British crown – Georg Graf zu Münster. (King George III had refused to recognize the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and maintained a separate diplomatic staff as Elector of Hanover to conduct the affairs of the family estate, the Duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, until the results of the Congress were concluded establishing the Kingdom of Hanover.)
  - Mecklenburg-Schwerin – Leopold von Plessen[14]

Virtually every state in Europe had a delegation in Vienna – more than 200 states and princely houses were represented at the Congress.[15] In addition, there were representatives of cities, corporations, religious organizations (for instance, abbeys) and special interest groups e.g. a delegation representing German publishers, demanding a copyright law and freedom of the press.[16] The Congress was noted for its lavish entertainment: according to a famous joke it did not move, but danced.

Course of the Congress

Initially, the representatives of the four victorious powers hoped to exclude the French from serious participation in the negotiations, but Talleyrand managed to skillfully insert himself into "her inner councils" in the first weeks of negotiations. He allied himself to a Committee of Eight lesser powers (including Spain, Sweden, and Portugal) to control the negotiations. Once Talleyrand was able to use this committee to make himself a part of the inner negotiations, he then left this committee,[17] once again abandoning his allies.



Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord proved an able negotiator for the defeated French.

The major Allies' indecision on how to conduct their affairs without provoking a united protest from the lesser powers led to the calling of a preliminary conference on protocol, to which Talleyrand and the Marquis of Labrador, Spain's representative, were invited on 30 September 1814.[18]

Congress Secretary Friedrich von Gentz reported, "The intervention of Talleyrand and Labrador has hopelessly upset all our plans. Talleyrand protested against the procedure we have adopted and soundly [be]rated us for two hours. It was a scene I shall never forget."[19] The embarrassed representatives of the Allies replied that the document concerning the protocol they had arranged actually meant nothing. "If it means so little, why did you sign it?" snapped Labrador.

Talleyrand's policy, directed as much by national as personal ambitions, demanded the close but by no means amicable relationship he had with Labrador, whom Talleyrand regarded with disdain.[20] Labrador later remarked of Talleyrand: "that cripple, unfortunately, is going to Vienna."[21] Talleyrand skirted additional articles suggested by Labrador: he had no intention of handing over the 12,000 *afrancesados* – Spanish fugitives, sympathetic to France, who had sworn fealty to Joseph Bonaparte (with whom he had unscrupulous business connections) – nor the bulk of the documents, paintings, pieces of fine art, and works of hydrography and natural history that had been looted from the archives, palaces, churches and cathedrals of Spain.[22]

Final Act

The Final Act, embodying all the separate treaties, was signed on 9 June 1815, (a few days before the Battle of Waterloo).[23] Its provisions included:



Map of Europe, after the Congress of Vienna, 1815

- Russia was given most of the Duchy of Warsaw (Poland) and was allowed to keep Finland (which it had annexed from Sweden in 1809 and held until 1917).
- Prussia was given two fifths of Saxony, parts of the Duchy of Warsaw (the Grand Duchy of Posen), Danzig, and the Rhineland/Westphalia.
- A German Confederation of 38 states was created from the previous 360 of the Holy Roman Empire, under the presidency of the Austrian Emperor. Only portions of the territory of Austria and Prussia were included in the Confederation.
- The Netherlands and the Southern Netherlands (approx. modern-day Belgium) were united in a constitutional monarchy, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, with the House of Orange-Nassau providing the king (the Eight Articles of London).
- To compensate for the Orange-Nassau's loss of the Nassau lands to Prussia, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg were to form a personal union under the House of Orange-Nassau, with Luxembourg (but not the Netherlands) inside the German Confederation.[24]
- Swedish Pomerania, ceded to Denmark a year earlier, was ceded to Prussia.
- The neutrality of Switzerland was guaranteed.
- Hanover gave up the Duchy of Lauenburg to Denmark, but was enlarged by the addition of former territories of the Bishop of Münster and by the formerly Prussian East Frisia, and made a kingdom.
- Most of the territorial gains of Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Nassau under the mediatizations of 1801–1806 were recognized. Bavaria also gained control of the Rhenish Palatinate and parts of the Napoleonic Duchy of Würzburg and Grand Duchy of Frankfurt. Hesse-Darmstadt, in exchange for giving up the Duchy of Westphalia to Prussia, was granted the city.
- Austria regained control of the Tirol and Salzburg; of the former Illyrian Provinces; of Tarnopol district (from Russia); received Lombardy-Venetia in Italy and Dubrovnik in Dalmatia. Former Austrian territory in Southwest Germany remained under the control of Württemberg and Baden, and the Austrian Netherlands were also not recovered.
- Habsburg princes were returned to control of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Duchy of Modena.
- The Papal States were under the rule of the pope and restored to their former extent, with the exception of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin, which remained part of France.
- The United Kingdom was confirmed in control of the Cape Colony in Southern Africa; Tobago; Ceylon; and various other colonies in Africa and Asia. Other colonies, most notably the Dutch East Indies and Martinique, were restored to their previous owners.
- The King of Sardinia was restored in Piedmont, Nice, and Savoy, and was given control of Genoa (putting an end to the brief proclamation of a restored Republic).
- The Duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla were given to Marie Louise, Napoleon's wife.
- The Duchy of Lucca was created for the House of Bourbon-Parma, which would have reversionary rights to Parma after the death of Marie Louise.
- The Bourbon Ferdinand IV, King of Sicily was restored to control of the Kingdom of Naples after Joachim Murat, the king installed by Bonaparte, supported Napoleon in the Hundred Days and started the Neapolitan War by attacking Austria.
- The slave trade was condemned.
- Freedom of navigation was guaranteed for many rivers, notably the Rhine and the Danube.

Polish-Saxon crisis

The most controversial subject at the Congress was the so-called Polish-Saxon Crisis. The Russians and Prussians proposed a deal in which much of the Prussian and Austrian shares of the partitions of Poland would go to Russia, which would create a

Polish Kingdom in personal union with Russia and Alexander as king. In compensation, the Prussians would receive all of Saxony, whose King was considered to have forfeited his throne as he had not abandoned Napoleon soon enough. The Austrians, French, and British did not approve of this plan, and, at the inspiration of Talleyrand, signed a secret treaty on 3 January 1815, agreeing to go to war, if necessary, to prevent the Russo-Prussian plan from coming to fruition.[18]

Though none of the three powers was ready for war, the Russians did not call the bluff, and an amicable settlement was set on 24 October 1815, by which Russia received most of the Napoleonic Duchy of Warsaw as a "Kingdom of Poland" – called Congress Poland – but did not receive the district of Poznań, Grand Duchy of Poznań, which was given to Prussia, nor Kraków, which became a free city. Prussia received 40% of Saxony – later known as the Province of Saxony, with the remainder returned to King Frederick Augustus I – Kingdom of Saxony.

Other changes



Alexander I of Russia (1812) considered himself a guarantor of European security.

The Congress's principal results, apart from its confirmation of France's loss of the territories annexed between 1795–1810, which had already been settled by the Treaty of Paris, were the enlargement of Russia, (which gained most of the Duchy of Warsaw) and Prussia, which acquired Westphalia and the northern Rhineland. The consolidation of Germany from the nearly 300 states of the Holy Roman Empire (dissolved in 1806) into a much more manageable thirty-nine states (4 of which were free cities) was confirmed. These states were formed into a loose German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia and Austria.

Representatives at the Congress agreed to numerous other territorial changes. By the Treaty of Kiel, Norway had been ceded by the king of Denmark-Norway to the king of Sweden. This sparked the nationalist movement which led to the establishment of the Kingdom of Norway on May 17, 1814 and the subsequent personal Union with Sweden. Austria gained Lombardy-Venetia in Northern Italy, while much of the rest of North-Central Italy went to Habsburg dynasties (the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchy of Modena, and the Duchy of Parma). The Papal States were restored to the Pope. The Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia was restored to its mainland possessions, and also gained control of the Republic of Genoa. In Southern Italy, Napoleon's brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, was originally allowed to retain his Kingdom of Naples, but his support of Napoleon in the Hundred Days led to the restoration of the Bourbon Ferdinand IV to the throne.[25]

A large United Kingdom of the Netherlands was created for the Prince of Orange, including both the old United Provinces and the formerly Austrian-ruled territories in the Southern Netherlands. There were other, less important territorial adjustments, including significant territorial gains for the German Kingdoms of Hanover (which gained East Frisia from Prussia and various other territories in Northwest Germany) and Bavaria (which gained the Rhenish Palatinate and territories in Franconia). The Duchy of Lauenburg was transferred from Hanover to Denmark, and Swedish Pomerania was annexed by Prussia. Switzerland was enlarged, and Swiss neutrality was established. Swiss mercenaries had played a significant role in European Wars for a couple of hundred years, and the intention was to put a stop to these actívities permanently.

During the wars, Portugal had lost its town of Olivença to Spain and moved to have it restored. Portugal is historically the oldest ally of the United Kingdom, and with its support succeeded in having the re-incorporation of Olivença decreed in Article 105 of the Final Act, which stated that the Congress "understood the occupation of Olivença to be illegal and recognized Portugal's rights". Portugal ratified the Final Act in 1815 but Spain would not sign and this became the most important hold-out against the Congress of Vienna. Deciding in the end that it was better to become part of Europe than stand alone, Spain finally accepted the Treaty on 7 May 1817; however, Olivença and its surroundings were never returned to Portuguese control and this question remains unresolved.[26] The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland received parts of the West Indies at the expense of the Netherlands and Spain and kept the former Dutch colonies of Ceylon and the Cape Colony as well as Malta and Heligoland. Under the Treaty of Paris, Britain obtained the protectorate over the United States of the Ionian Islands and the Seychelles.

Later criticism

The Congress of Vienna was frequently criticized by nineteenth-century and more recent historians for ignoring national and liberal impulses, and for imposing a stifling reaction on the Continent.[27] It was an integral part in what became known as the Conservative Order, in which the liberties and civil rights associated with the American and French Revolutions were de-emphasized, so that a fair balance of power, peace and stability, might be achieved.[27]

In the 20th century, however, many historians have come to admire the statesmen at the Congress, whose work prevented another widespread European war for nearly a hundred years (1815–1914). Among these is Henry Kissinger, who wrote his doctoral dissertation, *A World Restored (1957)*, on it. Prior to the opening of the Paris peace conference of 1918, the British Foreign Office commissioned a history of the Congress of Vienna to serve as an example to its own delegates of how to achieve an equally successful peace.[28] Besides, the main decisions of the Congress were made by the Four Great Powers and not all the countries of Europe could extend their rights at the Congress. The Italian peninsula became a mere "geographical expression" as divided into eight parts: Lombardy, Modena, Naples-Sicily, Parma, Piedmont-Sardinia, Tuscany, Venetia and the Papal States under the control of different powers.[29] Poland was under the influence of Russia after the Congress.[25] The arrangements made by the Four Great Powers sought to ensure future disputes would be settled in a manner that would avoid the terrible wars of the previous twenty years.[30] Although, the Congress of Vienna preserved the balance of power in Europe, it could not check the spread of revolutionary movements across the continent some 30 years later.

See also

- Age of Metternich
- Concert of Europe

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- Final Act of the Congress of Vienna
- Map of Europe in 1815 (http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/congress_vienna_1815.htm)
- Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) (http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=subject%3A%22Congress%20of%20Vienna%20(1814-1815)%22) Search Results at Internet Archive

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