

## Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Congress of Vienna

What emerged from the ruins of the Revolution was an empire under Napoleon I. The revolution had caused the citizens a great deal of pain and suffering. They had witnessed the fall of a weak king and the rise of a dictator who reigned with fear and terror. The people were ready for a new leader. A popular general, Napoleon Bonaparte, came to power after a coup d'état in 1799. A coup d'état is a sudden seizure and/or shift of power in a country. In this case, Napoleon seized control of France from the Jacobins. Napoleon was considered a national hero for his efforts defending the delegates of the National Convention during the early stages of the French Revolution. He is considered to be a military genius because of his ability to outsmart and outmaneuver his enemies during battle.



He was made first consul, then consul for life in 1802, and then Emperor in 1804. Traditionally, the pop would palace the crown on an emperor's head, but Napoleon placed the crown on his own head. By 1812, Napoleon controlled most of Europe, with Russia, Britain, and Portugal being exceptions. Napoleon's dynasty did not last quite as long as the monarchy that had come before it—his collapsed in 1814 after a series of military defeats, including a failed invasion of Russia. He was briefly restored the following year, after escaping from his island exile at Elba. But, with his famous defeat at the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon was exiled once more—this time to an island much further away, St. Helena.

With Napoleon's defeat, Europe and France were left with no clear leader. In order to create stability in Europe, a convention was held in Vienna, Austria. This became known as the Congress of Vienna. The congress set out to prevent future French aggression, restore a balance of power in Europe, and restore royal families in places where there had been revolutions, including France. By creating similarly sized and powerful kingdoms, the representatives at the Congress hoped to keep Europe peaceful for as long as possible. With the defeat of Napoleon France was once again a Monarchy in 1814, just 25 years after the start of the French Revolution.

