

Restoration, Romanticism, and Revolution, 1815-1848

III. Maintaining the Old Order: the Concert of Europe

A. The Congress System

1. England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia formed a Quadruple Alliance committing them to preserve the conservative order.
2. The great powers also agreed to hold periodic meetings or congresses to prevent crises from escalating into wider wars.
3. The effort to achieve consensus on foreign policy issues was known as the Concert of Europe. It marks the first significant experiment in collective security.

B. Revolt and Repression

1. The Congress of Vienna disappointed liberals and nationalists across Europe. Discontentment led to revolts that tested Metternich and the Concert of Europe.
2. Uprisings in Spain and Italy
 - The repressive policies of the restored Spanish Bourbon King Ferdinand VII provoked demands for a more representative government. Acting with the consent of the other great powers, the French forces intervened, enabling Ferdinand to regain absolute power.
 - Repressive monarchs in Naples and Sardinia-Piedmont also sparked rebellions. Metternich promptly responded by sending in Austrian forces who defeated the rebels.
3. Repression in Germany
 - Young Germans continued to hope for liberal reforms and a united Germany. Disillusioned by the Congress of Vienna, they formed student associations to discuss their concerns.
 - Alarmed by these student activists, Metternich persuaded the major German states to issue the Carlsbad Decrees. The decrees dissolved the student associations, censored books and newspapers, and used secret police to harass dissidents.
4. The Decembrist Revolt in Russia
 - When Tsar Alexander I died in December 1825, a group of army officers rebelled, calling for constitutional reform.

Crash Course

- Alexander's successor, Nicholas I (reigned 1825-1855) ruthlessly suppressed the Decembrists.
- Under Nicholas I's oppressive regime, Russia became Europe's most powerful reactionary stronghold.