

### History (HL) Notes

P29 “Years of Ambition”

Questions 1b, 2a & b

1b) *How successfully did the European Congresses maintain European peace between 1815-1830?*

- The European Congresses maintained European peace in 1815-1830 considerably well.
- (P10) P.W. Schroeder evaluates the Congress of Vienna “...*How successfully did it establish peace? The Vienna system comes out with a remarkably positive balance sheet...It managed the German, French and Italian question as well as could reasonably be hoped. And even in areas of apparent failure, like Italy and Poland, though it did not prevent future conflict, it at least controlled it for a good long while.*”
- The first Treaty of Paris was too generous on France and especially Napoleon Bonaparte who escaped from his exile on Elba on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1815, only to again menace a frigid and war torn Europe. Only at the second Treaty of Paris on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1915 did the Congress of Vienna get it right
- The Congress of Vienna solved the German and French question well, making Austria into the dominant power of the peninsula, this led to no further violence between the years 1815-1830. However it did turn out to be a drain of resources for Austria.
- The Congress of Vienna managed to control France well by first installing a constitutional monarchy, and then forming the Quadruple alliance between Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria where they committed themselves to the containment of France. This sparked to violence between 1815-1830
- The solution to the Netherlands lasted until 1914.
- The Congress of Troppau set the pattern for the congresses that were to follow, the Congress of Laibach and the Congress of Verona. These Congresses did not really affect the peace in Europe between 1815-1830, but only dealt with the Greek and Spanish revolution.
- From the evidence we can see that the Congresses successfully held the peace in Europe between 1815-1830, once Napoleon was safely exiled away.

*Recommended reading:* P10) P.W. Schroeder evaluates the Congress of Vienna  
P8) Assessing the congress of Vienna

2a) *Outline the main terms of the treaty of Vienna*

- The congress of Vienna worshipped the principle of legitimacy. And ignored claims of liberalism and nationalism- the claims of the people of Europe.
- Under the principle of compensation countries most involved in the war against Napoleon were to be compensated with land from Napoleons France.
- The French empire was returned to its original size, how it was before Napoleons reign, no land was taken away. The peacemakers at Vienna constructed a sort of protective barrier on France's eastern border, and on its north-eastern frontier, the new and supposedly more powerful United Netherlands was meant to keep France in check. France was also made to pay a heavy indemnity. As a result of the Congress, France was given a constitutional monarchy, designed to Contribute to European stability.
- To solve the problem of the Netherlands the Congress of Vienna decided to bring the Dutch and the Belgians under joint rule of William of Orange to make a United Netherlands.
- To solve the German and Italian question, the Congress decided that Austria was to be made into the dominant power of the Peninsula and thus resume its control of Lombardy and annex Venitia.

Recommended reading: P6 "A: The congress of Vienna"  
P9 All

*2B) To What Extent were the great powers at Vienna motivated by principle or self-interest?*

- The great powers at the Congress of Vienna were motivated by principles that genuinely served their self-interest. All the peacemakers at the Congress wanted to make peace, and each country showed the ability to make sacrifices and the ability for compromise.
- The successful resolution of the Poland and Saxony crisis proves this. Russia was determined to convert all of Poland including territories claimed by Prussia and Austria in the 1780s and 1790s, into a sort of protectorate. Prussia would then be compensated with the whole of Saxony. Austria and Britain could not accept such an increase in Russian power. After tense negotiations, in the end, Prussia gave up its demands to the half of Saxony and the Russian tsar agreed that Prussia might retake some of its Polish territories. This crisis reveals much about the collective mentality of the congressmen at Vienna. Pure self-interest lay behind the Austro-Russian/Prussian showdown, and a degree of sacrifice and compromise lay in the solution, all powers showing willingness to give and take. This crisis could easily have turned into another European war.
- The aim of the congress of Vienna was to restore and revitalise war-torn Europe after the tumultuous reign of Napoleon. It was in everyone's interests to create a peaceful Europe and most people were sick of war. This factor motivated the congress to, at all costs, preserve the peace.
- In the Congress of Vienna solution to the Italian and German question, Austria selflessly agreed to become the dominant power of the peninsula, accepting a policing role in the region. This became a burden for Austria, and was a drain of resources.
- The motive of the problem in the Netherlands was the vulnerability it would cause for Britain if it ever fell into French hands. London and the south east of England would be perpetually vulnerable to invasion if this happened. So, William of Orange agreed to take control of both the Dutch and the Belgians. This is another case of collective mentality and the ability to give and take.
- Self-interest was behind each move of the major countries at the congress of Vienna. This was a collective interest of peace, and if war threatened, the countries involved would rather reach a compromise than cause war, as we saw in the crisis of Poland and Saxony.

Recommended Reading:  
P5,6,7,

