

## Personalities of the Congress of Vienna

*Mainly, the four major powers of Europe (Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain) made most of the big decisions. Austria was represented by Prince von Metternich, the Austrian minister of state who was also acting president of the Congress. The Russians sent Alexander I, the emperor of Russia. The main delegate from Prussia was Prince Karl August von Hardenberg, and Great Britain was represented by Lord Castlereagh, and later Arthur Wellesley, the first duke of Wellington. This group of major powers decided that France, Spain, and the smaller powers would have no say in important decisions; however, the French diplomat, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, was successful in allowing France to have an equal voice in the negotiations. Talleyrand became the deciding vote in many of the decisions.*

### Prince Klemens von Metternich



Prince Klemens von Metternich was an Austrian statesman, and the Austrian minister of foreign affairs from 1809 to 1848. Metternich was also a champion of conservatism. Metternich, the mediator at the Congress of Vienna, was an insightful man. He knew that for the meeting to be a success, he would have to modify his conservative ideals for a new Europe. It was a great success to Metternich that the conference was held in Vienna. Wanting to secure the Austrian predominance, Klemens tried to form German and Italian confederations, both under Austrian rule. Along with Castlereagh, Metternich opposed the elimination of France. Metternich also agreed that Russia must be kept from obtaining too much control. Another plan that Metternich wanted to achieve at the Congress of Vienna, was long-lasting order in Europe. But Klemens' biggest hope for the Congress of Vienna was to restore conservative governments in the new Europe. Metternich was able to achieve

most of these goals, but neither a German confederation nor an Italian confederation ever came about. Prince Klemens craftily manipulated whole countries, for he was a master at controlling people. In the end, Klemens obtain most of the things he wanted through strong will and determination.

### Czar Alexander I



Czar Alexander I, the emperor of Russia from 1801-1825, was best known for his alternately befriending, then fighting Napoleon I. In the early 1810's (1813-1815) Alexander helped form the Big Four, which finally defeated the French emperor. As a part of the Congress of Vienna, the czar played a big part in the agreement to balance power and to get along with one another. In this meeting, Alexander was determined to obtain the only spoil that he wanted, Poland. The allies (Britain, Russia, Prussia), afraid of the Asiatic Russians obtaining too much control, only gave Russia a portion of Poland. Disgusted and disillusioned by the cynicism of Metternich, Talleyrand, and Castlereagh towards the idea of all people getting along, the czar formed the Holy Alliance in 1815. With this group, Alexander I tried to create a world based on the ideas of justice and

charity.

Because of these radical and liberal ideas, czar Alexander I was thought to be foolish and almost childish in his goals. Alexander was an idealist, and towards his later year, the czar became even more involved in mystical and spiritual events. Alexander was also a very religious man. He had such liberal ideas as giving Poland a liberal constitution (this allowed Poland to be partially restored) and funding universities and

secondary schools in his country. Alexander was unpredictable, and did many things on whims. For this reason, it is thought that he might not have died in Taganrog, but moved to Siberia to become a hermit.

### Prince Karl August von Hardenberg



Karl von Hardenberg was a Prussian statesman and the Prussian delegate in attendance at the Congress of Vienna. Hardenberg was able to bring about the rapprochement between Russia and Britain over the division of Saxony and Poland. He waved Prussian rights to Saxony in return for the Rhineland. Hardenberg later associated himself with Alexander I and his Holy Alliance. A resourceful man, Karl saw that some things must be given up for the good of the continent.

### Viscount Robert Castlereagh



Viscount Castlereagh was the British foreign secretary from 1812 to 1822. Castlereagh was a major player in the Congress of Vienna. He was involved with the redrawing of the post-Napoleonic map and was a major influence in the Concert of Europe. As a leader in bringing together the powers they overthrew Napoleon and in forming the Congress of Vienna, Castlereagh was a large influence in promoting diplomacy by conference. The viscount's main objective at the Congress of Vienna was to keep Russia from gaining too much control and to strengthen a weak Germany and Italy. Castlereagh also took the lead in denying Russia's territorial demands on Poland. Throughout later years of his life, Castlereagh continued to oppose Russian expansion.

The viscount was a thoughtful, introspective man who realized the dangers of an ultra-powerful Russia. He was known for brilliant diplomatic techniques and persuasive tactics. In 1821, Castlereagh became ill. He began to show signs of abnormal suspicion, which in 1822 was full blown paranoia. The viscount's reputation became soiled by vicious rumors. Unable to stand this disgrace, Castlereagh committed suicide.

### Prince Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand

Charles Talleyrand was a French statesman and a diplomat. He was the diplomat from France assigned to the Congress of Vienna. With the interest of France, Talleyrand managed to divide the Allies and to keep France in one piece. He did this by forming an alliance with Britain and Austria. As this new alliance, the three powers were able to prevent the splitting of French land. By sheer cunning, Talleyrand was able to obtain what he wanted. He was, quite arguably, the most skillful and best diplomat that France has ever had.



[Back](#)