

Events the napoleonic wars history essay



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This paper states and discusses the key events of the wars taking place during Napoleon's reign as emperor of France, which were considered by some historical references triggered by the French revolutions of 1789, and starting in 1803, in which France conquered most of Europe with no rivals and unmatched till 1808 when other empires started fighting back, but still France was unmatched until 1812, the year in which Napoleon's army invaded Russia and ended the series of Napoleonic wars. The declination of the power of the army in France triggered the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy.

The Napoleonic Wars

“ Read over and over again in the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus, Turenne, Eugene and Frederic.. This is the only way to become a great general and master the secrets of the art of war”, not only said by Napoleon, but also applied during his campaigns in the conquest of other European nations.

The War between Britain and France

Although Britain's Coalition partners didn't have much involvement in the Napoleonic wars, because of the strength of its naval force, Britain remained at war with France throughout the Napoleonic wars period, by minimizing the intensity of land warfare not only with France but on a global scale for more than a decade. Britain also bought the assistance of the military forces by paying huge amounts to other European states.

By occupying Malta and gathering a Third Coalition, not only Britain, but also the Holy Roman Empire violated the terms of previous treaties. The war intentions of the Third Coalition changed the aim of the conflict as it was clear that their intentions were stopping Napoleon.

War of the Third Coalition

Although Napoleon planned an assault on Great Britain, he called it off as his plan to gain naval superiority through distraction failed, the plan was to threaten Britain's possessions in the West Indies, but was interrupted when Admiral Villeneuve's Fleet was defeated by Admiral Nelson's fleet during the battle of Trafalgar (21 October 1805), which was very fascinating as the British side didn't even lose a single ship!

The British signed a treaty with Russia, hoping to remove the French from the Batavian Republic

And the Swiss Confederation. Austria later joined the treaty when Napoleon proclaimed himself as the king of Italy. Sweden also joined the coalition formally later on.

The war was started by the coalition as Austria began by attacking Bavaria with 70, 000 men, but the French responded by sending out its army from Italy, Napoleon surrounded Austrian army at Ulm, which led to the surrender of the Austrian army without significant losses.

As a result of the defeat of the main Austrian army north of the Alps by the French army in Italy, Napoleon gained control of Vienna. However, he was forced to face a larger Austro-Russian army far from his supply line; he

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managed to crush the Austro-Russian army after nine hours of intense combat with Czar Alexander I of Russia and Emperor Francis II of the Holy Roman Empire present at the battle of Austerlitz, which was also called the war of three emperors. It was considered Napoleon's master piece.

War of the fourth coalition

After defeating the third coalition, Great Britain joined another coalition along with Prussia, Russia, Saxony and Sweden. Napoleon formed the confederation of the Rhine out of German states. He also elevated the rulers of Saxony and Bavaria to the status of kings.

In August 1806 Frederick William III of Prussia decided to engage with France independently from any other great power. The results were horrible, as Napoleon himself managed to defeat a detachment of the Prussian army at Jena while one of his Marshals (Davout) defeated a bulk of the army with a single corps at Auerstadt during the same day. As the French army advanced in kept on increasing, this resulted in the destruction of the effectiveness of the Prussian army.

On October 27 , 1806, Napoleon entered Berlin after crushing the Prussian army, passing by the tomb of Frederick the great saying “ If he were alive we wouldn't be here today” after commanding his marshal to show respect by removing their hats.

After occupying Germany, Napoleon drove Russian forces out of Poland, recruiting more soldiers as he proceeds, along with Italian soldiers now under his reign. This didn't satisfy Napoleon as he later decides to chase

Russia all the way to capture the temporary Prussian capitol Königsberg. The battle of Heilsberg forced the Russian army to retreat even further north. The way Napoleon controlled the path of the Russian army was fascinating, as he routed them to Friedland. After the defeat Czar Alexander had to establish a treaty with Napoleon at Tilsit.

By September, Marshal Brune managed to enter the Swedish Pomerania, forcing the Swedish army to withdraw from the war.

While France was occupied with Russia and Prussia, Great Britain was able to occupy Denmark, benefiting from its large fleet, which could have repaired the damage done to France at the battle of Trafalgar, but Britain's attack gave France a new ally, Denmark.

War of the Fifth coalition 1809

The French thought that after the treaty with Russia in 1807, they would have a period of peace, but suddenly out of the blue France was in another war, this time with Spain. The plan of overthrowing Napoleon and placing Murat on the throne was initiated by Talleyrand and Napoleon's minister of police, Fouché. While Talleyrand was dismissed, Fouché got away with just a warning. The situation was under control but royalist terrorism continued elsewhere, especially in Normandy and Brittany. This proved that Catholic provinces flooded with discontent, which later led to the deterioration of Napoleon's relationship with the pope to the point that he ordered that the pope would be arrested and imprisoned for five years.

While Austria was seeking revenge, it was also seeking the help of Russia and Prussia. Russia agreed to take no part in attacking Austria while it pretended to remain France's ally, and Prussia agreed to supply Austria 80,000 men to aid in their effort to defeat France.

At first Great Britain was uncertain if it would lend its support to the Austrian forces, but later promised financial aid and support on the north coast of Europe. This was what was needed to prepare for the war by the Austrian leader Francis. Although the financial minister warned Francis about the poor condition of the treasury, and would even further decline if the army remained mobilized.

The Austrian foreign minister in France was prince Metternich, he tried to appear sincere, but started to spy and plot with Talleyrand and others to undermine Napoleon, along with patriotic duty, Metternich had personal hatred towards Napoleon and what he stood for. Although he skillfully spied on the French court and gave excellent detailed reports about decisions and reactions to the Austrian mobilization, his warnings were not taken into consideration by the Austrian authority.

Napoleon was not in good shape as his realization of his current status blinded him from thinking about his next steps. While he depended on his Russian ally, he was sure that a two front war on Austria would guarantee victory, he began to mobilize an army to seize the threat at the east. He withdrew men from Spain and called even more from the confederation of the Rhine states to participate in this war with full power