

Magadh Mahila College

Patna University, Patna

HISTORY

B.A. – I

PAPER – IV

RISE OF MODERN WEST

Unit – 3

**Topic: - Criticism of the Treaty
of Vienna**

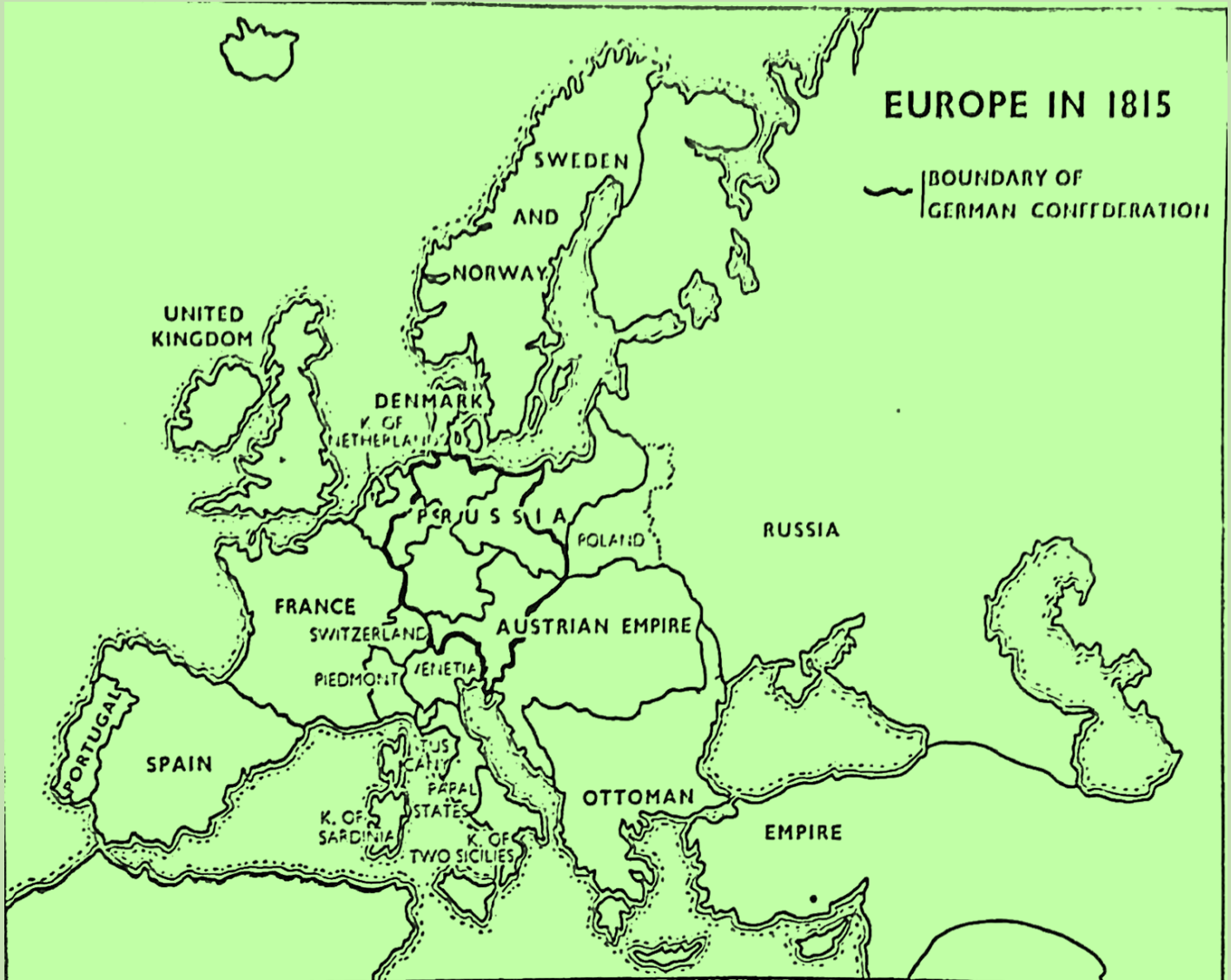
By:-

Dr. Amit Raj (Guest teacher)
Department of History
Magadh Mahila College
Patna University, Patna
Email : amitr286@gmail.com
Mob : 9472811500

CRITICISM OF THE TREATY

I. Principle of Legitimacy Set Aside

The principle of "legitimacy" was set aside when it did not suit the convenience of the big powers. Many of the old German princess were not restored, nor were the Republics of Venice and Genoa.



II. Greed and Self-interest of the Big Powers

In making the territorial divisions, the sovereigns of Russia, Austria and Prussia indulged in high-sounding phrases like "the reconstruction of the moral order," "the regeneration of the political system of Europe" and "an enduring peace founded on a just redistribution of political forces."

These were mere platitudes to disguise their own selfish and sinister designs. To be exact, "self-interest was the key to the welter of bargains and agreements" at the deliberations of the Congress.

Each of the three eastern states acquired large territories at the cost of their weak and helpless neighbor's, who were denied their birth-right of independence and unity in order to ensure a durable peace.

(1) **Russia** annexed the largest share of Poland and thus crushed the hopes and aspirations of the Poles.

(2) **Prussia** was the biggest gainer. Her territories now included the Rhinish states rich in mineral resources and she was by and large a German State now having lost her Slav-Polish subjects.

(3) **Austria** by virtue of her leadership of the German Confederation and of her Italian possessions enjoyed a unique position in Central Europe. She substituted French influence by hers in Italy and reduced Italy to a mere "geographical expression." And in order to maintain her hold in Italy and Germany she ushered in a reactionary era and crushed all liberal movements in Europe.

III. The Principle of Nationality Ignored

The settlement of Vienna completely ignored the principle of nationality in order to uphold the "principle of legitimacy" or to maintain the "balance of power." The national aspirations of the Belgians, Norwegians, Poles, Italians and Germans were completely crushed.

(1) A Catholic Belgium was annexed to a Protestant Holland. The two had nothing in common. Their economy, traditions, languages, etc. were all different.

(2) Sweden was compensated with the annexation of Norway, much against the wishes of the Norwegian people.

(3) Poland ardently hoped to achieve her independence and sovereignty, but to satisfy the greed of the Tsar she was denied her independence.

(4) Italian patriots had been hoping to unite all Italian states into a national state. They received a rude shock when Austria substituted her influence over Italy for that of France.

(5) German unity could not be achieved and the German patriots fell terribly frustrated because King Frederick William III, who was timid and weak, refused to grasp the leadership of the German people on account of his deference for the Hapsburgs. And Austria under Metternich was positively hostile to the German unification and was interested only in a loose confederation, and finally her will prevailed.

Thus we find that 'everywhere the spirit of nationalism was crushed under the heels of reactionary monarchs and the Belgians, Italians and Germans had to wait for some time to achieve their independence and unity.

The seeds of discontent were inherent in the very nature and basis of the settlement of Vienna and the next 50 years or so saw a good deal of bloodshed to undo its unjust work.

IV. Peace among Great Powers

Perhaps the only justification of the Treaty of Vienna lay in the fact that it ensured peace among the Great Powers at least for the next 40 years. They could not get out of the principle of "legitimacy" or "balance of power" and establish national states, firstly, because on the eve of the War of Liberation they had committed themselves to "compensation" if they were successful in overthrowing Napoleon, and secondly, they were rather scared of the spirit of nationalism which had caused so much bloodshed in Europe.

Chief Objects. Its chief objects were as follows:

(1) To maintain general peace in Europe.

(2) To make sure that Napoleon or any member of his family did not again endanger peace.

(3) To ensure that the Second Treaty of Paris was not upset and to generally supervise over France and to keep the revolutionary French ideas in check.

(4) To maintain the "balance of power".

(5) To meet at intervals for mutual consultation to solve international disputes which might jeopardize the peace and security of Europe.

Therefore, gradually a "cleavage" occurred between Great Britain and the three Eastern powers over the issue of intervention in the internal affairs of other countries.

The Quadruple Alliance carried out its objects through Congresses from 1815 to 1822. But the differences between the signatories became more and more pronounced at each Congress and ultimately the "Concert" broke up.

Suggested Readings:-

1. Meenakshi Phukan : Rise of Modern West
2. G. Clark : Early Modern Europe
3. Raghubir Dayal : Modern European History
4. Jain and Mathur : World History (1500 – 1950)
5. G.M. Trevelyan : Social History of England
6. Parthsarathi Gupta (ed.) : आधुनिक पश्चिम का उदय
7. लाल बहादुर वर्मा : आधुनिक यूरोप का इतिहास
