

Ques: 19th century Europe continued to fight against the legacy of the French Revolution itself. Examine the statement.

Ans: It is a well-known proverb that dead Ceaser is stronger than Ceaser alive. It happened in the case of the French Revolution as well. Although Napoleon, the emperor, was defeated in the battle of Waterloo but Napoleon, a revolutionary survived this defeat and just as a specter continued to haunt the ancient regime in Europe.

French Revolution left its legacy in the form of liberalism and nationalism, which the Congress of Vienna had devised to dig deeper into the earth. But the Congress of Vienna was not able to bury these revolutionary ideas nor was it able to preserve the old order and a time came when Congress itself succumbed to the revolutionary forces.

The first big challenge before the Congress of Vienna was the revolutions of the 1830s and those of 1848. These revolutions presented the demand for constitutional reforms in most of the countries, but simultaneously the right to self-judgment in divided regimes like Italy and Germany, Vienna system received a jolt as the result of these revolutions as these revolutions resulted in the liberation of Greece (1832), that of Belgium (1833) and the decline of the legitimate government of France (1830).

But certainly, a more formidable challenge to the Congress of Vienna came from an ambitious monarchy i.e. Monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia and that of Prussia. They completely shattered the Vienna system by unifying the region of Italy and that of Germany under a single monarch.

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But still, the process did not stop here, nationalism as a much stronger ideological force started to threaten the unity and integrity of old empires i.e. Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire and the Russian empires. Among them, the Ottoman Empire was certainly the most affected entity as it witnessed its gradual fragmentation till the First World War.

Thus, it does not appear to be an exaggeration to say that French Revolution left its wider imprint on 19th century Europe.

