



Russian Empire



Status: Great Power.

Monarch: His Majesty Tsar Alexander I, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russians (left).

Delegate: His Majesty Tsar Alexander I, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russians (right).

Background

In Russian historiography, the war that led to Napoleon's downfall – known to us as the War of the Sixth Coalition – is called the 'Overseas Campaign of the Russian Army'. The fact that it was Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia which led to his downfall – and that the Russian Army had captured Paris to accept Napoleon's surrender – was not lost on the Tsar, who took every opportunity to portray the war as a **Russian victory**, and himself as the great peacemaker of Europe.

Earlier in the Napoleonic Wars, Russia had played both sides, allying with Napoleon in 1807 and helping him fight Sweden by invading Finland. It was only in 1812 – after Russia opened trade with Britain – that France finally invaded, but a Russian strategy of **scorched earth** led to the total disintegration of Napoleon's largest army. In the war that followed, Tsar Alexander personally led the Russian Army across Europe, fighting the French all the way to Paris.



The 1812 Fire of Moscow, orchestrated by the retreating Russians

Despite their eventual success, Russia was **heavily wounded** from the invasion. In particular, **Moscow had been almost totally destroyed** when it was abandoned to fall into French hands, and Tsar Alexander had declared it his personal mission to **avenge this loss** against France.

Objectives

Russia's immediate goal going into the conference was the **annexation of Poland** (Duchy of Warsaw), which they had invaded on the way to Paris, and placed under military occupation. As the pre-eminent land power in Europe, Russia hoped to promote an **anti-republican European order**, promoting peace and stability against the violent threat of liberal revolution.