



Napoleon's Empire Collapses

MAIN IDEA

POWER AND AUTHORITY

Napoleon's conquests aroused nationalistic feelings across Europe and contributed to his downfall.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

In the 1990s, nationalistic feelings contributed to the breakup of nations such as Yugoslavia.

TERMS & NAMES

- blockade
- Continental System
- guerrilla
- Peninsular War
- scorched-earth policy
- Waterloo
- Hundred Days

SETTING THE STAGE Napoleon worried about what would happen to his vast empire after his death. He feared it would fall apart unless he had an heir whose right to succeed him was undisputed. His wife, Josephine, had failed to bear him a child. He, therefore, divorced her and formed an alliance with the Austrian royal family by marrying Marie Louise, the grandniece of Marie Antoinette. In 1811, Marie Louise gave birth to a son, Napoleon II, whom Napoleon named king of Rome.

TAKING NOTES

Recognizing Effects

Use a chart to identify Napoleon's three mistakes and the impact they had on the French Empire.

Napoleon's Mistakes	Effect on Empire

Napoleon's Costly Mistakes

Napoleon's own personality proved to be the greatest danger to the future of his empire. His desire for power had raised him to great heights, and the same love of power led him to his doom. In his efforts to extend the French Empire and crush Great Britain, Napoleon made three disastrous mistakes.

The Continental System In November 1806, Napoleon set up a **blockade**—a forcible closing of ports—to prevent all trade and communication between Great Britain and other European nations. Napoleon called this policy the **Continental System** because it was supposed to make continental Europe more self-sufficient. Napoleon also intended it to destroy Great Britain's commercial and industrial economy.

Napoleon's blockade, however, was not nearly tight enough. Aided by the British, smugglers managed to bring cargo from Britain into Europe. At times, Napoleon's allies also disregarded the blockade. Even members of Napoleon's family defied the policy, including his brother, Louis, whom he had made king of Holland. While the blockade weakened British trade, it did not destroy it. In addition, Britain responded with its own blockade. And because the British had a stronger navy, they were better able than the French to make the blockade work.

To enforce the blockade, the British navy stopped neutral ships bound for the continent and forced them to sail to a British port to be searched and taxed. American ships were among those stopped by the British navy. Angered, the U.S.

▼ "Little Johnny Bull"—Great Britain—waves a sword at Napoleon as the emperor straddles the globe.

