



Despite its defeat after 23 years of war in which it was the major protagonist, France remained the most important country in Europe. It had a great influence on other countries on the continent, which followed developments that occurred there so much so that a Russian monarch said that Europe sneezed if France had a cold. It would be an error to think that France merely returned to the situation that had existed before the French Revolution, although many French leaders wished to do so. It was impossible for that to occur, as events demonstrated when a French king actually tried to do so. In many ways, Restoration France proved to be progressive, especially during the reign of its first restored monarch, Louis XVIII.

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