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## The 1808-1814 Peninsula war and downfall of Emperor Napoleon 1

Questions to ponder

1. Examine the effects of Peninsula war (1808-1814) on downfall of Napoleon I.

The **Peninsular War** (1808-1814) was a major conflict during the Napoleonic Wars, fought in the **Iberian Peninsula** by **Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom** against the invading and occupying forces of the **First French Empire**. Here are some key points about the war:

1. **Origins:** The war began when Napoleon invaded Portugal in 1807, and later Spain in 1808, after the Portuguese and Spanish monarchies refused to comply with his Continental System.
2. **Spanish Uprising:** The French occupation of Spain led to widespread resistance and uprisings, including the Dos de Mayo Uprising in Madrid in 1808.
3. **Guerrilla Warfare:** Spanish guerrillas played a crucial role in the war, using hit-and-run tactics to disrupt French supply lines and communications.
4. **British Involvement:** The British army, led by **Arthur Wellesley** (later the Duke of Wellington), provided significant support to the Spanish and Portuguese forces.
5. **Major Battles:** Key battles included the Battle of Bailén, the Battle of Vitoria, and the Battle of Toulouse.
6. **Outcome:** The war ended with the defeat of the French forces and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain with King Ferdinand VII.

### Causes of the Peninsular war (1808-1814)

The **Peninsular War** (1808-1814) was caused by several key factors:

1. **Napoleon's Expansion:** Napoleon's desire to enforce the Continental System led him to invade Portugal and Spain, as both countries were trading with Britain.
2. **Portuguese Refusal:** When Portugal refused to comply with the Continental System, Napoleon ordered the invasion of Portugal in 1807.
3. **Spanish Uprising:** The French occupation of Spain in 1808 sparked widespread resistance and uprisings among the Spanish population.

4. **British Intervention:** The United Kingdom supported the Spanish and Portuguese resistance, sending military aid and troops to the Iberian Peninsula.
5. **Abdication of Spanish Monarchs:** Napoleon forced the abdications of the Spanish King Ferdinand VII and his father Charles IV, installing his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne.
6. **Denouncing of the Continental System by Pope Pius VII.** This caused Napoleon to invade Papal States in order to force them to comply.
7. **Unpopularity of Napoleon in Spain.** Napoleon invaded Spain to force them to respect him and the French Culture.

### **The consequences of the Peninsular war to the downfall of Napoleon I**

The **Peninsular War** had several significant consequences that contributed to the downfall of **Napoleon I**:

1. **Military Drain:** The war tied down hundreds of thousands of French troops in Spain and Portugal for nearly six years, depleting Napoleon's military resources and weakening his forces.
2. **Guerrilla Warfare:** The Spanish and Portuguese resistance, including widespread guerrilla warfare, continuously harassed French troops, causing significant casualties and logistical challenges.
3. **Economic Strain:** The prolonged conflict drained the French treasury, as maintaining an army in the Iberian Peninsula was costly.
4. **Loss of Allies:** The brutality of the French occupation and the imposition of Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as the King of Spain alienated potential allies and fueled resistance across Europe.
5. **British Support:** The British army, led by **Arthur Wellesley** (later the Duke of Wellington), provided crucial support to the Spanish and Portuguese forces, strengthening the coalition against Napoleon.
6. **Diplomatic Isolation:** The Peninsular War contributed to Napoleon's diplomatic isolation, as countries like Russia and Prussia became increasingly wary of his ambitions and eventually joined the coalition against him.
7. **Internal army conflicts.** The internal inflicts in military weakened the armies ability to win the war.
8. **The defeat of Napoleon in the Peninsular War** encouraged other European State to resist Napoleon rule and forming coalitions that finally overthrew Napoleon's rule in Europe.

### **Reasons for Napoleon's defeat during the Peninsular War, 1808-1814**

Napoleon's defeat during the **Peninsular War** (1808-1814) can be attributed to several key factors:

1. **Guerrilla Warfare:** Spanish guerrillas continuously harassed French troops, disrupting supply lines and communication, and inflicting significant casualties.
2. **British Intervention:** The British army, led by **Arthur Wellesley** (later the Duke of Wellington), provided crucial support to the Spanish and Portuguese forces, bolstering their resistance.
3. **Logistical Challenges:** The vast distances and difficult terrain of the Iberian Peninsula posed significant logistical challenges for the French army, straining their resources.
4. **Economic Strain:** Maintaining a large military presence in Spain and Portugal drained French resources and finances, weakening Napoleon's overall military capacity.
5. **Political Unrest:** The French occupation and the imposition of Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as the King of Spain, led to widespread resistance and uprisings among the Spanish population.
6. **Battle of Vitoria:** The decisive Battle of Vitoria in 1813, where Wellington's forces defeated the French, marked a turning point in the war and led to the eventual withdrawal of French troops from Spain.
7. **Imprisonment of the pope caused worldwide Catholic condemnation.** This led to loss of Catholics support for Napoleon.
8. **Internal army conflicts.** The internal inflicts in military weakened the armies ability to win the war.

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