

England against Napoleon

❶ Earl Compton's¹ speech in the House of Commons, 4 November 1813.

[...] As the House was already fully acquainted with all the glorious details which had been lately received from the allied armies on the continent, he² should not attempt entering into a recapitulation of them; but should content himself with saying, what he was convinced the fact would bear him out in asserting, that, previous to the last great battle³, Buonaparté⁴ must have lost not fewer than 100,000 men. Last year, France, Austria, Bavaria, and Prussia, were all united in one common cause⁵; now, the three powers last mentioned were united with Russia against France, and in support of the cause in which this country was engaged. Of what description, too, was the force which, the ruler of France, the modern Attila, had at his disposal? — Was it composed of veterans, as his former armies had been?
10 No; on the contrary, it was made up of men dragged from their families, and carried bound in chains to fight his battles.[...]

❷ “The Devil’s darling”. English caricature, 1814.



➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, explain how and why England England waged war against Napoleon.

¹ Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton (1790-1851), later marquess of Northampton, became a MP in 1812.

²“He” : the speaker, Compton.

³The battle of Leipzig, or Battle of the Nations, 16-19 October 1813, in which Napoleon was decisively defeated.

⁴Note the e acute, used as a token of contempt.

⁵This was the situation when Napoleon invaded Russia on 22 June 1812.