

long ago closed down every forum for public discussion, from political clubs to Masonic lodges. The periodical press had been silenced, foreign news-sheets proscribed, bookshops closed. Lectures were no longer held at the university, lest they bring together large groups of students and provoke riots. The municipal authorities kept a wary eye on potential subversives. But there was little they or the king could do to save the city and the state from final dissolution, which came in the closing months of 1798.

In November Great Britain formed a new coalition against France. In response the French government demanded that Charles Emanuel honor the alliance between them. Then, without waiting for an answer, on December 6 France declared war on the Savoyard monarchy. A French army crossed the frontier from Lombardy and occupied Turin: no resistance was offered, because both the city fathers and the king knew it was useless. Granted a safe-conduct by the French commander, Charles Emanuel IV, the royal family, and the court departed from Turin on December 8. Their destination was Sardinia, the one remaining Savoyard territory, where they were destined to remain, virtual exiles, for the next sixteen years. Until their return in 1814, except for a brief interval in 1799-1800, Turin would remain under French occupation.