

prisons, where they often waited for years to receive a trial. Likewise, French measures to reduce the role of the Catholic Church did not have a measurable impact on the religious convictions and practices of the local population. Indeed, there were few signs of a drop in religious observance between 1798 and 1814, while only a minority of Turin's upper class and intellectual elite embraced the enlightened, anti-clerical ideas advanced by the French Revolution.

The immediate impact of the French occupation and Napoleon's economic policies on large segments of the city's population compounded the problems of implementing administrative reforms. On the whole, the years between 1798 and 1814 did not represent a period of growth and expansion for the economy of Piedmont and its capital city. The devastation and enormous costs of the Napoleonic wars reduced imports, fueled inflation, and intensified tax pressures so that by 1802 officials estimated that from one-fourth to a third of the population were in desperate need of assistance. The departure of the Savoyard court and many noble families from the city hit especially hard the producers of luxury goods. The ensuing political reorganization of the Italian peninsula accentuated these difficulties by cutting off local economic groups from their old markets to the east and by redirecting their goods and trade towards France where they had to compete with favored French producers. Turin's subordinate place in the French Empire and the burdens of taxes and requisitions further weakened its manufacturing sector and reduced the city's role in the exportation of Piedmontese silk and rice. Demographic trends reflected the short-term consequences of French economic policies. The city's population, which had steadily increased in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, dropped by nearly a third in the first two decades of the new century.

The authoritarian character of Napoleonic modernizing reforms, which treated the people of Turin as the passive recipients of orders from above, magnified the discontent and resentment provoked by economic hardship, and thereby further sabotaged the efforts of the French authorities to create a broad base of active support for the regime. Despite the lure of new honors and opportunities, only a small minority of the old landed aristocratic families embraced the imperial order with any enthusiasm. Most of the nobles who participated in the public life of the Napoleonic empire did so with reservations, while many other old titled families, who did not go into exile, remained sullenly hostile toward a foreign regime that reduced their role in the state, denied them their traditional independence, severed their attachment to the House of Savoy, and offended their religious beliefs with its attacks on the in-