

the Piedmontese army at the battle of Novara on March 23, 1849. In the wake of this defeat, Charles Albert abdicated in favor of his son, Victor Emanuel II, who had to negotiate a peace settlement with the victorious Austrians.

Thus, the extraordinary wave of revolution that had raised patriotic hopes to a fever pitch in Turin in 1848 concluded the following year in bitter disillusionment, defeat, and disarray for both moderate and democratic proponents of reform and national independence. The first defeat of the Piedmontese army at Custoza in the summer of 1848 drove moderate political forces everywhere on the peninsula into retreat. Those constitutional liberals, who were not dismissed or overthrown, faced mounting popular opposition and often wound up allying with their reactionary adversaries in defense of order and property. Democratic forces in the isolated republican bastions of Venice and Rome enjoyed a certain prestige and popularity for their determination to fight on, but ultimately they fared little better, succumbing in 1849 to the superior military might of Austria and the France of Louis Napoleon.

Predictably, the failure of revolutions led to a second restoration on the Italian peninsula championed by Austria with the support of Pius IX and Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. As early as May 1848, frightened Neapolitan moderates supported a *coup d'état* by Ferdinand II that led to the suspension of parliament and a return to royal absolutism in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Most other Italian princes followed suit, abrogating the constitutions they had reluctantly granted in 1848 and relying on Habsburg forces to reassert autocratic power in their respective states.

The one great exception to the triumph of absolutism and reaction in Italy after 1848 could be found in Turin. In the short run, three circumstances distinguished the political situation in the Savoyard capital from that in other capitals on the peninsula. First, the House of Savoy emerged from the revolutions as the only dynasty in Italy that was not dependent on Austrian influence and military might. Secondly, Turin was the capital of the only post-1848 Italian state to retain a constitution with an elected parliament that shared governmental responsibilities with the monarchy. For his part, the new Savoyard ruler, Victor Emanuel II, accepted constitutional procedures if only to pre-empt the democratic opposition at home and to win moderate liberal support for his anti-Austrian policies. The survival of the Statuto allowed political development in Turin to diverge in significant ways from the other regional capitals during the next decade. Lastly, with the entrance of