

these two factions, in which Cavour rapidly emerged as the dominant political figure in Piedmont, first as minister of agriculture, trade and navigation in a government led by D'Azeglio in 1850 and then as prime minister after 1852. The second son of a prominent old-line aristocratic family, Cavour combined many of the stereotypical virtues of both the nobility and the bourgeoisie. After resigning his commission in the officer corps, he became a successful commercial farmer on his family's estates, a respected expert in political economy, and an early advocate of railroads before embarking on a career in politics in 1847. At the same time, his cousin described him as "an aristocrat by birth, taste, and nature" who considered the old nobility to be "by nature superior to the bourgeois classes". This blend of aristocratic presumption and bourgeois values shaped Cavour's moderate political principles. By the 1830s he had begun to formulate his central idea of the *juste milieu* or middle path, in which government avoided the extremes of absolutism and anarchy by following a program of gradual orderly progress. Thus, he was an outspoken foe of democratic and republican ideas and movements, who also opposed the excessive influence of Catholic traditionalists in public, which he viewed as a dangerous obstacle both to innovation and freedom of thought in general. His travels abroad, and especially his long stays in Great Britain, convinced him of the need for free trade and economic development, together with timely social reforms, to improve the conditions of the masses and give them a stake in the established order.

Cavour found ample opportunities to translate his political principles into practice from 1850 onwards when he embarked upon an ambitious program to modernize Church-state relations, the economy, and political life in Piedmont. The moderate aristocratic leader encountered the fiercest opposition in his efforts to curb the privileged status and independent authority of the Catholic Church. Tensions between the papacy and the Piedmontese state grew steadily from 1848 onwards over issues of principle and policy. After the revolutions of that year, Pope Pius IX became an uncompromising anti-constitutionalist and defender of the Church's temporal power, precisely at a time when the House of Savoy was adopting a new constitutional system and displaying expansionist ambitions in northern Italy. The easing of censorship in Turin and the rest of the Savoyard kingdom further aggravated the situation, since it opened the way for the publication of articles in the local press highly critical of the Vatican and the Church. To make matters worse, Monsignor Luigi Franzoni, archbishop of Turin from 1831 to 1862, was an intransigent opponent of any concession to "the new times". For