

Nevertheless, the exiles contributed greatly to the “Italianization” of political and cultural life in Turin where they introduced a decidedly more cosmopolitan atmosphere during the 1850s. To begin with, many of them had been prominent cultural and political figures in their old states. Accordingly, they brought with them distinctive cultural values, political talents, and contacts from their respective regions of origin that necessarily affected the character of public discourse in the city. On the whole, these exiles showed little inclination to assimilate into Turin’s old society, preferring instead to keep their ties to their old regions and to promote larger national aspirations. Daily exposure to talented individuals from other parts of the peninsula broadened the horizons of their local collaborators among Turin’s professionals, bankers, merchants, and intellectuals, who began to participate actively in political debates and activities. Once they had arrived, these cultural pilgrims from the rest of Italy contributed greatly to the renewal of the old royal capital’s intellectual life. Turin’s new cultural vitality found expression, first of all, in the large number of theaters that provided an impressive range of musical and theatrical productions in the 1850s for the expanding audience of military officers, students, and the prosperous middle classes. The same decade saw Turin emerge as a major information hub on the peninsula, with thirteen daily newspapers that provided both opinions and news, as well as fifty-three magazines and newspapers, dedicated to politics, science, literature, the fine arts, and industry. The resulting debates and discussions help to make the provincial city a hothouse, in which a genuinely national public opinion began to take form.

Significantly, the process of Italianization extended beyond Turin’s upper classes. The city’s most widely read newspaper, *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, specifically targeted a popular readership of small shopkeepers, artisans, and craftsmen with its low prices and simple language. From its founding in 1848 onward, the paper promoted the moderate liberal cause at home and an expanded role for Piedmont on the Italian peninsula. In a similar vein, Italian became the public language of parliament and replaced Latin in the school curriculum. As a result, the increasing political and cultural integration of Piedmontese moderates and liberal-minded elites elsewhere combined with growing support from the popular classes to make Turin the center of Italian patriotism in the mid-1850s. By then, a broad consensus had developed that Piedmont was the only state that combined the free institutions, economic resources, military might, diplomatic expertise and political will necessary to unify the peninsula and create an Italian nation.