

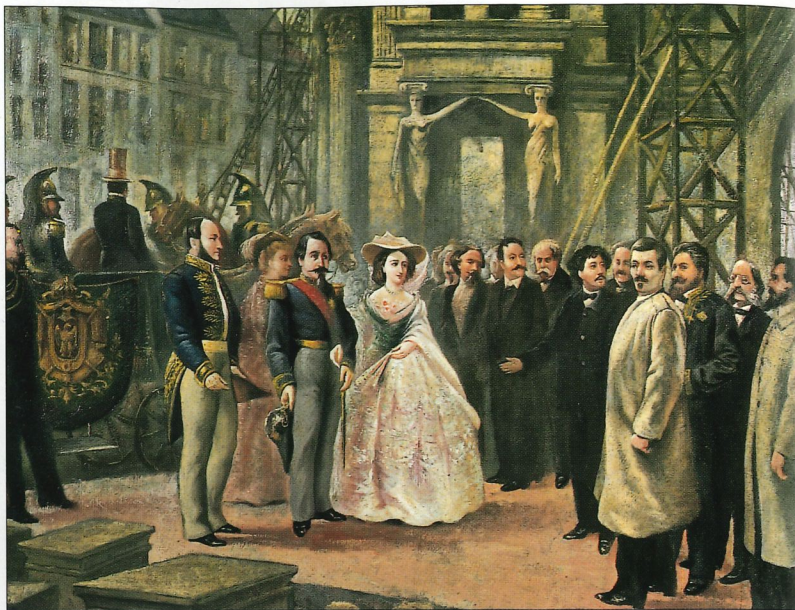
While the political geography of France changed little after 1815 the country's industrial geography was transformed, highlighting the importance of local supplies of coal and the acceptance of steam power. While new industrial heartlands evolved in the far north, the east and the Lyonnais, many areas of traditional manufacturing – such as the woollen industries in Languedoc – failed to adapt. A contrast was opening up between a “modern” north and east and an “archaic” south and west.



Paris is the heart of France. Let us put all our efforts into embellishing this great city. Let us open new roads, make populous neighbourhoods which lack light and air more healthy, and let benevolent light penetrate everywhere within our walls.

Napoleon III's call for the modernization of the city of Paris was implemented by Baron Haussmann, prefect of the Seine department from 1853 to 1869. Balzac's Paris – crumbling with age, slum-ridden, insanitary, prone to cholera epidemics, over-crowded – was to be brought up to date. Some rejected the changes on aesthetic grounds; the anarchist activist Proudhon denounced "the new, monotonous and tiring city of M. Haussmann". There were also many on the Left who felt that there was a hidden political agenda involved in the change – namely, the destruction of the old workers' neigh-

The Haussmannization of Paris



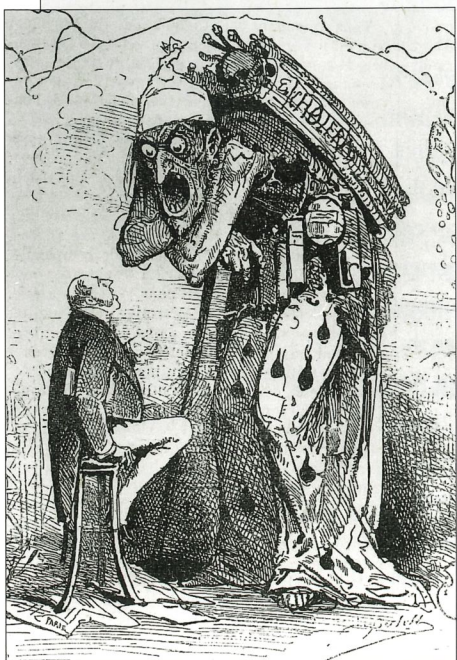
Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie lay the foundation stone for the new opera house, in the company of Prefect Haussmann.

bourhoods that had fostered the radicals and *sans-culottes* of the Parisian revolutionary tradition. Barricades and boulevards could not coexist.

Modernization was part of a more general process of making the city the showcase of the imperial regime. Prestige building integrated into the new street plan included the Opéra, the Bibliothèque Nationale, extensions to the Louvre palace, the iron buildings of Les Halles (the city market), plus the development of open leisure spaces (Bois de Vincennes, Bois de Boulogne, and so on). Such changes also had the power of example: right up to World War I a great many major cities followed in the tracks of "Haussmannization" and "boulevardization".

Modernization also involved making Paris the economic motor of the country as a whole. The fact that Paris was the hub of a new railway network under-

lined Napoleon's commitment. Just as railways acted to unify the national market and energize the national economy, so the new boulevards and broad avenues, driven through the jungle of narrow medieval streets, were to connect up and produce a more integrated urban society and economy. In practice the changes also had the effect of introducing greater social distance between the classes. Classes had traditionally been integrated vertically in the city: first- and second-floor rooms were occupied by the bourgeoisie, the top floor and garret by the poor. Haussmannization brought about a new differentiation, between richer and poorer areas. The inner city became more middle-class, while workers were pushed outwards to a proletarian "red belt" encompassing the city. Haussmann had not solved social and political problems, merely displaced them.



Cholera, embodied as a rag-picker, protests to Haussmann that the modernization of Paris is costing him his home.