

VI. The bourgeoisie

Proofread by “OP”, editor’s notes in blue. I only speak English, so any suggestions are based solely on how the English reads.

The Third Estate was as profoundly divided as the first two orders. It has become fashionable nowadays to call Third Estate ~~the class of the capitalists~~ the order of the capitalist class (1), the proletariat thus becoming the fourth estate 9. ~~Aside from~~ Besides the fact that the modern proletariat is a ~~*class*~~ class, and not an estate *estate* (2), a social layer distinguished by its economic situation (3), ~~and not separate judicial institutions,~~ not by a legal institution, one cannot ~~talk~~ speak of a fourth estate for the simple reason that the proletariat already existed within the Third Estate. For it encompassed the whole of the population that did not belong to the first two estates, thus not only the capitalists, but the artisans, the peasants and the proletariat as well. It is easy to ~~conceive of the huge heterogeneity~~ imagine the immense diversity of interests this might have represented. Herein we see the most violent antagonisms, the most diverse methods of struggle and goals at play. It is impossible to speak of an homogeneous class struggle. (4)

1. The estates system represented legal status, not objective social status the way “class” does.
2. Italics from the original German
3. I feel like “situation” doesn’t communicate the qualitative aspect as well as “standing”, or “characteristics”, but I think it should stay because it rhymes with “institution” (which I don’t believe can be replaced easily, correct me if I’m wrong).
4. I have several suggestions for this one: “If all parties share the same interests, it is impossible to have class conflict” “Classes with homogenous interests cannot clash”, and “It is impossible to speak of class struggle as a uniform dichotomy”. I think it’s best to consult the original German for this sentence.

What is generally meant today by Third Estate, the capitalist class, was itself not an orderly phalanx.

At the top of this class was high finance. Being the foremost creditor of the state, it did have excellent reasons to push for reforms ~~that~~ which would save it from bankruptcy, increase its revenues and lower its spending. But according to it (1), these reforms should conform to the tenet "Wash my hair without wetting my

head getting it wet". And indeed, the gentlemen financiers had all the reasons in the world to be opposed to ~~real radical finance reforms, without even speaking of social ones.~~ a truly radical reform of finance, not to mention (?) social reforms.

1) The state? Or the high financiers? ("the state" or "them")

Most of them were ~~large feudal domains owners~~ themselves owners of large feudal domains, who held ~~nobility titles~~ titles of nobility and were not ready to renounce the privileges and revenues attached to them. ~~Besides they held for the continuation of nobility privileges~~ Besides, their interest in the preservation of noble prerogative was that ~~the interested underhanded?~~ sympathy which the creditor naturally holds towards its debtor. They were not only the ~~king's creditor~~ creditors to the king, but also the indebted nobility's. Economists could well demonstrate that the ~~return~~ profit? productivity? of landed property would increase if capitalist norms were applied to it and not semi-feudal principles. In order to ~~move~~ progress to a purely capitalist agriculture, one had to own a certain *capital* to ~~set-up~~ build various ~~installations~~ facilities, acquire livestock, tools, etc. Most of the nobility had none. The abolition of feudal ~~fees was a direct threat of bankruptcy~~ dues threatened the nobility with bankruptcy. Their creditors held no reason whatsoever to run such a risk.

~~When it came to sociability as well, as we've seen before, the links between nobility and finance had become closer and closer. As we have already seen, the social ties linking the nobility and finance had drawn tighter and tighter. (1) Any finance reform would have inevitably lead to the replacing replacement of the tax farmers-general~~ *Ferme Generale tax system* by a state administration. A number of the most important sources of revenue, the salt tax (*gabelle*), the beverage tax (*aides*), ~~the octroi~~ customs duties (*octroi*) (2), the tobacco monopoly, ~~existed~~ were leased out under "affermage". TN1 The ~~farmers landowners~~ gave paid the state 166 millions of pounds- *livres* (4) annually (during the last few years before the Revolution), but extorted up to double from ~~the people~~ their tenants?. The ~~affermage of taxes~~ *affermage tax system* was one of the most lucrative methods ~~to exploit~~ of exploiting the people, how could ~~those~~ these gentlemen of the high finance have voluntarily renounced it! One assuredly ought not to expect them to take a stand against it.

1. Does "sociability" imply that class wise the nobles and financiers were merging together, or that they were literally socializing with each other

(like at Versailles?) This whole sentence should be compared against the German IMO.

2. In the original German, Kautsky provides these definitions (google translate) with the French word in parentheses. “octroi” does not get the French word provided and is translated as “customs duties”, and “affermage” is translated as “leased out”. Personally, I think we should keep *affermage* in italics and add a substantial translator’s / editor’s note explaining how the *Ferme Generale* tax system worked.
3. “Farmers” brings to mind petty-bourg “family farmers” implied to actually work the land. I think “landowners” or maybe “farm owners” / “owners of farmland” is more appropriate here.
4. Livres is from the original German

~~Neither~~ Nor did they have any interest in ending the state deficit, and thus its ~~indebting~~ insolvency. They only ~~withheld for themselves~~ kept part of the debt’s ~~bonds~~ state’s debt securities for themselves, and ~~were keen on investing~~ preferred to offload the greater part of it ~~them~~, for highly interesting returns at exorbitant interest, ~~in~~ to the “public”, :? small and medium capitalists, and notably rentiers (1). High finance was thus highly skilled in the art of putting on other shoulders the *risk* a new loan yielded. But the *profit* they extracted from it, ~~either directly, or indirectly~~ both directly, and indirectly (2), exploiting the state as well as the public, was gigantic. Any new loan equated to a great rich harvest for the ~~people~~ men of finance. Nothing would have been more disagreeable to them than the institution of a balanced budget ~~without deficit that~~ which would have rendered new loans superfluous.

1. Who are the “public?” I’m assuming they are the small capitalists and rentiers – if so, use a colon or hyphen. I’m also not entirely sure who the “rentiers” are – the idle rich of the nobility?
2. The sentence after this implies “both” rather than either / or

That the sympathies of high finance as a *class* ~~had gone to~~ had sided with the Ancien Régime, the state of privileges, is therefore no surprise. It called for reforms, that much is true, but who ~~didn't~~ did not call for them before the Revolution! Even the most stubborn of aristocrats had come to the conviction that the current state of affairs (1) was intolerable and that reforms were ~~going to~~ necessary required, ~~insatisfaction was global~~ dissatisfaction was widespread (2).

But each class wanted "reforms" that would ~~give it advantages~~ bring them benefits, not impose sacrifices.

1. Present state of things? :P
2. Global implies other countries besides France

However, high finance's political unrest had, against its will, a powerful effect on minds and was transforming the most peaceful citizens into political activists and partisans of freedom. It was the canal through which an ever-growing ~~expanding~~ mass of ~~Treasure~~ Treasury bonds ~~passed~~ flowed before irrigating the ~~people~~ wider populace?. As loans were multiplying faster and faster, it was through ~~it~~ finance that small and average capital ~~transited~~ passed before ~~ending up in~~ arriving at the court and disappearing ~~in~~ into the vast pockets of ~~courtisans~~ courtiers (1), yet ~~without ever~~ never filling them, given as they were riddled with holes. More and more small and medium capitalists ~~were becoming~~ became creditors of the state. This type of bourgeois is usually no danger to a government. For a philistine, politics was a fruitless occupation, at most costing time and money. He sticks to the principle that one should stay contented with tending to one's garden and leave public affairs to the king. In an absolute state making use of police espionage on a mass scale, which was what France used to be, where citizens' participation in politics was ~~furthermore~~ considered a crime of some sort, the philistine only loathed bothering with whatever was going on beyond his four walls all the more.

1. "Courtiers", unless Kautsky is referring to the king's prostitutes.

But things changed when he became a creditor of the state and the possibility of a bankruptcy ~~was uttered~~ began to be raised. Politics ceased to be an ~~improductive~~ fruitless pastime; it became a serious business. ~~The interest of the~~ The small ~~or~~ and medium bourgeois suddenly ~~piqued by~~ developed an interest in all matters of ~~management of the state~~ state administration, and as ~~since~~ it was not hard to see how the privileges of the first two estates were ~~primarily responsible~~ most to blame for the misery of public finances, given they ~~were taking~~ pocketed the lion's share and contributed next to nothing to public revenue ~~in return?~~, he from then on became an energetic opponent, furiously hostile to privileges and enamoured ~~of~~ with freedom liberty and equality.

However, it wasn't only as a creditor of the state, but also as a the merchant or the industrialist, that he also was that was brought to battle against the privileges' state-regime of privilege.

The Because the army and marine's navy's higher ranks were reserved for the nobility, by now descended to total complete moral and physical decadence, the French arms armed campaigns?, weapons? were less and less successful. The 18th century practically only almost always saw wars that ended in disadvantageous commercial clauses adverse trade terms and the loss of precious colonies for France - one only has to look at the Peace of Utrecht (1718), the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), of Paris (1763), of Versailles (1783). And, for For international trade to prosper, one first and foremost needed a foreign policy generating good that produced positive results.

Within the French borders, commerce trade was hindered by old feudal barriers. A number of provinces were states in their own right, with particular special powers in a number of domains, their own administration, and were closed off from other parts of the kingdom by customary customs barriers. On top of that were excise taxes and feudal lords' rights on markets, tolls, etc. which were all but paralyzing exchanges. The price of merchandises coming goods arriving from Japan or China after having crossed stormy oceans where pirates roamed was only multiplied by three or four. Meanwhile, the price of wine going from Orléanais to Normandy was multiplied by at least twenty due to the numerous taxes striking the merchandise all across its path journey 10 . Wine-commerce specifically The wine trade in particular, one of the most important branches of commerce in France, was particularly especially difficult owing to the fees and dues it was burdened with. Thus, for For example, vineyard owners in the Bordeaux district Bordeaux district's vineyard owners could ban from sale the sale of all wine that didn't come from this city not produced locally. The wine regions of Languedoc, Périgord, Agénois and Quercy, whose waterways met behind the walls of Bordeaux, had their products barred from entering to the benefit of Bordeaux' winegrowers.

And at the same time, communications were in a dismal state. There was no money to ~~uphold roads~~ maintain the roads, and ~~the works~~ tasks for which the peasants' corvée labor ~~wasn't~~ was not enough were not carried out.

For commerce to flourish, nobility's privileges had to be abolished, the army and ~~marine~~ navy had to be reformed, the provinces' particularism had to be broken, and ~~the crown's and feudal lords' custom fees~~ the customs duties levied by the crown and feudal lords eliminated. In a word, the interests of commerce required "freedom and equality *liberte et egalite* (1)".

1. Keep in the original French since *liberte, egalite, fraternite* is a famous slogan

Merchants however did not unanimously unite ~~under~~ below this banner.

One of the favorite methods of prerevolutionary royalty to procure money was to monopolize a branch of industry or commerce and sell the monopoly to a small number of favorites, or share with them the ~~revenue~~ profits? Proceeds? of this monopolistic exploitation of the public.

The most lucrative monopolies were the great companies dealing with ~~oversea~~ trade in countries overseas. ~~There existed other commercial monopolies~~ Other monopolies were granted in certain cities to guilds, ~~for~~ some to organized corporations (1). One example ~~of such~~, which survived Turgot's reforms, was Paris' guild of wine merchants.

1. I don't know enough about the history to comment myself, but we should clarify what the difference was between a "guild" and a "corporation" in prerevolutionary France

It is therefore not surprising that the merchants who received these favors remained supporters of the regime of privileges, despite belonging to the Third Estate. ~~That the privileged in this category remained in favor of the privileges regime while belonging to the Third Estate is thus nothing surprising.~~

The provinces' closeness to one another was not a target of hostility from all capitalists either. ~~The Obstacles to commerce of grain~~ **the grain trade** between the different provinces, notably the impossibility to export it from one **province** to another without a specific, and hard to obtain authorization, prevented lands that had a good harvest from feeding those which had a poor one, and thus ~~constituted~~ **provided** powerful leverage for *speculation on grain*, speculation which often took immense dimensions and was one of the most ~~efficient ways~~ **profitable means** to exploit the people. Just as ~~today~~ protectionist customs tariffs **today** enable the formation of cartels, ~~hinderances~~ **barriers** to interior trade enabled the formation of corporations based on speculative buybacks ~~and conjurations which were called~~ **, conspiracies known as "famine pacts"**. At the head of these ~~conspirator could~~ **sometimes sit the plotters one sometimes found the** monarch, 11 and usury on wheat was one of ~~its~~ **his** best sources of ~~revenues~~ **income**. It goes without saying that a ~~"très-chrétien"~~ **"most christian"** (1) king of this caliber was also as little prone **reluctant** to ~~hear speak of liberalization of the commerce of grain~~ **hear about the liberalization of the grain trade** as his partners in speculation, circumcized or not.

1. I had to look this up. I think we should translate this term for the sake of the joke, maybe with a footnote pointing to the French original term if the meaning is different enough.

~~Just like commerce, the Ancien Régime corseted industry.~~ **Like trade, industry was suffocated by the old regime.** (1) Not out of desire to restrain it! On the contrary, it ~~benefited from its extreme benevolence~~ **received its greatest goodwill**. A flourishing capitalist industry was considered one of the most abundant sources of wealth for the state, ~~that~~ **and** thus had to be supported by all means. Since the guilds of artisans were attempting to obstruct capitalist industry as much as possible, threatened by its competition, and trying to quibble with it any way they could, the kings granted it a very particular personal protection. Nevertheless they never thought of radically eliminating the obstacle by ~~abolishing guilds,~~ **abolishing the guild system entirely,** as ~~in doing so~~ they would **thereby** have lost an abundant source of ~~revenue~~ **income**, as we will see later. But they ~~granted~~ **did grant** manufactures privileges that exempted them from feudal and guild-related hurdles and fees. A manufacture that benefited from these held the title of "royal manufacture". And royalty went further yet. In order to have them deliver products as perfect as possible, entrepreneurs ~~were taught about~~ **were informed** of the ~~best techniques,~~ **latest methods of production,** and specific regulations demanded that they follow them.

1. “Corsetait” has been translated as “strangled” in prior chapters, however it seems too extreme in this context.

These measures could remain profitable to ~~manufactures~~ industries (1) still in ~~the infancy stage~~ their infancy. But things took a different turn when, in the second half of the 18th century, capitalist industry started to develop faster and reached a higher level. The royal ~~privilege~~ crib which protected ~~them~~ industry from the artisans guilds' quibbles and trials ~~became~~ had become a servitude cell, ~~that many times~~ which now often blocked new investments (2). Regulations were becoming unbearable. They had helped to spread the best working techniques in the past, but now, they were artificially imposing to retain the retaining the worst. The ~~1860s~~ 1760s saw the beginnings start of the technical revolution which replaced the manufacture with the factory and would give birth to modern big industry. In the ~~older days~~ past, in manufactures, methods and tools evolved but very slowly. But now, innovations were popping up at a high rate and were quickly adopted in England. If the French wanted to compete, they had to undergo the same improvements themselves. Getting rid of the guilds' barriers and of bureaucratic regulations was not solely merely? a profit motive anymore, but a question of survival for the capitalist industry. But Turgot's 1776 attempts towards this goal failed to gain fruition, however. The privileged estates? knew that the process of reform could not stop there once it was unleashed (3). They overturned him and erased what he had done. Only the revolution managed had the will to tear down the barriers holding large industry back.

1. I like “industries” for the alliteration with “infancy”, however, “manufactures” is more appropriate if Kautsky is specifically referring to small workshops.
2. This is almost definitely straying from the original French meaning, but the “crib” builds on the infant industry metaphor, and allows us to find a way to communicate a “servitude” which holds you back. Also, I think we need to find a more specific wording for how the artisan guilds attacked nascent industry.
3. These recommendations at the end probably moved too far from the original text, but I’m keeping them for you to judge.

A far from negligible fraction of industrial capitalists had however an interest in maintaining the ~~privileges regime~~ regime of privilege. Like commerce, capitalist industry primarily fulfilled ~~luxury needs~~ the needs of luxury. In part because there was no interior market and the peasantry ~~manufactured~~ produced for (1) itself the industrial? products it needed, in part also because it was a court

industry nurtured by royalty. In France, the most important manufactures were used to produce silk fabric, velvet, lace, tapestries, porcelain, cosmetic powders, paper (it ~~still used to be a~~ **was still a** luxury item a hundred years ago), etc. These corporations' ~~best customers were belonged to court nobility~~ **had their best customers in the circles of the court nobility**, amongst the privileged. To trim their ~~revenues~~ **incomes** would endanger the existence of an entire array of industrial capitalists. As a result, they did not welcome the revolution with the utmost sympathy.

1. I don't want to confuse peasant production for capitalist manufacturing.

It is significant that when the counter-revolution took arms in 1793, at its head - next to Vendée, one of the most backwards regions of France, with a flourishing and vigorous ~~remaining~~ feudal regime **still remaining**- was the city of Lyon, the most industrial city of the country, famous for its silk industry and its gold embroideries. Already in 1790, a tentative uprising was led by priests and nobles, and Lyon ~~remaining~~ **remained** a bastion of legitimism and catholicism for a long time. And when in 1795 the hegemony of Jacobins was smashed, ~~Paris'~~ **bourgeoisie the bourgeoisie of Paris** did not hide ~~its~~ **their** anti-republican royalist sympathies. If things had ~~went~~ **gone** according to ~~its~~ **their** wishes, **we would not have had to wait long for** the restoration of legitimate monarchy and the return of emigrated aristocrats. ~~would not have waited any longer.~~

Notes :

9 - The idea of a fourth estate appears early in the revolution, but this term then ~~only stands~~ **did not stand?** for the ~~worker~~ **working** class. Engels ~~communicated to me~~ **informed me of** interesting data on this topic from a book by Karejev, written in Russian - ~~though a language~~ **I do not practice** : "**The peasants and the peasantry** question in France in the last quarter of the 18th century", Moscow 1879, p.327 : As early as the 25th of April 1789, Dufourny de Villers' "Notebook of the fourth estate, of the poor day laborers, the disabled, the indigents, etc., the order of the unfortunate" was published. As a general rule, the fourth estate is the

peasants. For example Noilliac, "The strongest of pamphlets. The order of Peasants at the Estates General, 26 February 1789". ~~One can read~~ [It reads on](#) p.9 : "Let us borrow from the Swedish constitution its four orders.". Vartout, "Letter from a peasant to his priest on a new manner in which to hold the Estates General, Cartrouville, 1789", p.7 : "I had heard say that in a country to the north... the order of peasants was admitted to the Estates General." One can also find other conceptions of the fourth estate. By fourth estate one brochure means the merchants, another public employees, etc.

TN1 - See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferme_g%C3%A9n%C3%A9rale

10 - Louis Blanc, "History of the Revolution, ~~Third tome~~ [Volume III](#)" (p.156 in Brussels edition, 1847)

11 - Louis the XVth was the main shareholder of the Malisset corporation, a speculative buybacks corporation. Within ~~its inventories of his court spendings~~ [the archives of his court expenditures](#) can be found a treasurer specifically assigned to "His Majesty's speculation on grain".