

# Reading Project: Year 5

In our reading project we are going to discuss some of the most famous novels of English and American literature. All the novels in this project require careful reading beyond the plot level. For a full understanding you will have to read between the lines and find the symbolism and allusions of the texts. In order to see these hidden beauties always read with a pencil in your hand and mark any interesting or odd passages in the margin. Discuss your selections in your readers' conferences.

## Step 1: Choosing a novel

Visit Amazon.com in the internet and find the five books in our project. Read the brief plot summaries and some readers' comments, then choose the novel that interests you most. You need not order them at Amazon. All of the books are available in Graz.

### The Books:

John Steinbeck, *The Pearl*

George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*

## Step 2: Getting Started: (Reading Diary)

Read the first chapter of your novel and write a 10-minute entry in your reading diary. Please take your reading diary very seriously. Go beyond the plot level and write about all your thoughts, associations, questions...(Check your handout "What is a reading diary?" for further instructions.) Write a second entry into your reading diary after you have read the first half of your novel, and a third one after finishing.

Your reading diary and your marginal notes in the book will be used as a basis for discussion in your readers' conferences. These notes will also help you remember your reflections later (for Matura preparation for example).

## Step 3: Readers' Conferences and Workshop tasks

1. Work in your group and share your reflections and questions. Read each other's diaries and try to answer each other's questions. Ask your teacher for help in case of disagreements or open problems.
2. In each readers' conference choose 10 vocab. items that you would like to remember and write them into your vocab book.
3. Do the workshop tasks carefully and collect all the tasks in a folder.

## Step 4: Preparing the Presentation

Choose one or two of the presentation tasks (see separate handout). Distribute the work load evenly among the group members and design an interesting, well-rounded group presentation.

Copy your contribution for all the group members + one for your teacher.

## Step 5: Presentations

Groups present their novels.

Peer-evaluation and feedback of the presentations + Assessment and feedback from teacher

## Step 6: Project Folder

Organize your project folder and hand it in for final assessment. Hand in your reading diary.

# Book Presentation

For our final presentations of the reading project choose one of the following tasks. Each student in your group must do a different task. Discuss which of the tasks are most meaningful in connection with your novel. Choose tasks that complement each other so that the class gets a full picture of the main themes, symbolism, background and style of your novel.

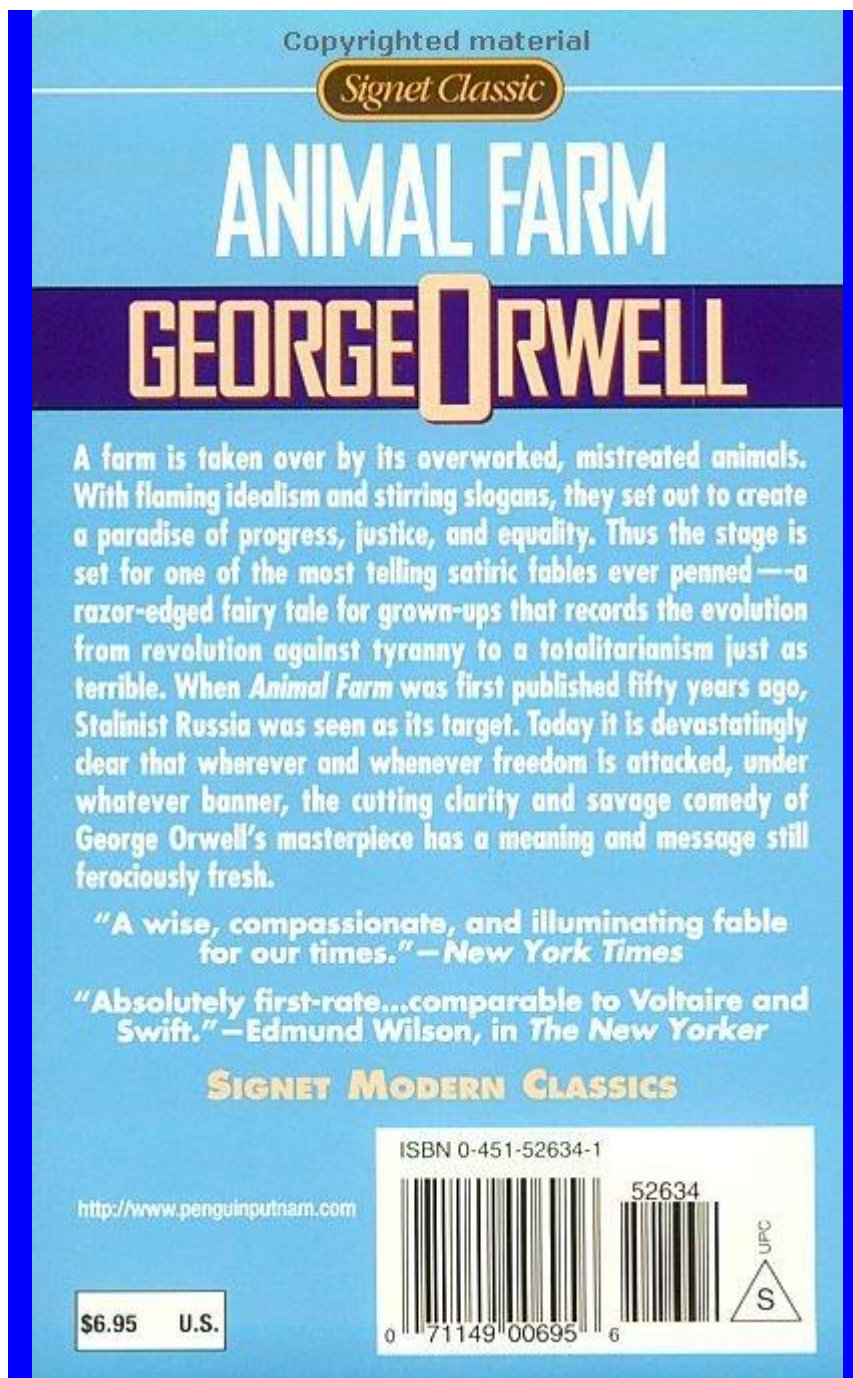
- Short biography of the author
- Present an alternative book cover and blurb (and print out all the covers and blurbs available at Amazon.com). Discuss the symbolism of these covers.
- Character portraits of the main characters. (You might want to use the *character profiles* handout. Adding a picture will make your portraits even more realistic.)
- Present the historical and cultural background of your novel. (Use visual aids)
- Write a newspaper article reporting an important incident in your novel.
- Write a poem or song-lyrics that might be used in a film or radio-play of your book.
- Act out a scene of your choice.
- Prepare a "bubble sheet" (A3 poster) where you collect important quotes from your book.
- Identity bags: Bring a bag full of objects that are somehow important to the main character of your book. Show them and explain their relevance.
- Design a board game or quiz to be played in class.
- Choose your favorite scene and imagine how it would be shown in a film. Draw a film storyboard.
- Find a painting or other work of art that deals with one of the main themes in your book. (Choose a painting that reflects the symbolic and metaphorical level of your book, rather than a painting that shows the setting of your story.)
- Road signs: Identify a few symbolic items in your book and draw them like "road signs". Consider the shapes and colors of road signs and make use of their symbolism. Explain the meaning of the symbol on the back of your sign (50 – 100 words).
- Alternative idea: If you have an idea of your own contact your teacher about it.

Additional ideas for the readers of *Animal Farm* and *Brave New World*

- Present the basic principles of propaganda and advertising (use visual aids)
- Give a propaganda speech about any topic of your choice. Then explain the methods you have used.
- Present to pros and cons of genetic engineering (use visual aids)

# Animal Farm

by  
George Orwell



### Task 1. Reading diary and readers' conferences

When reading *Animal Farm* keep these main themes of the story in mind. Underline or mark any passages that show how freedom is attacked and tyranny is established. When writing your **reading diary** focus your reflections on these issues and note the typical behavior of the different animals.

**Task 2. A cross-section of human society (part one)**

In this fable you will come across quite a few different kinds of animals representing a cross-section of human society. Look at the list of animals below and attribute the adjectives from the box to the animals as they are seen in the eyes of man. As you go along add additional information about the animals. What roles do they play on Animal Farm?

deceitful, gentle, aggressive, trustworthy, venerable, reliable, lazy, industrious, patient, smart, fair, cunning, simple, foolish, shrewd, sociable, easy-going, envious, obstinate, courageous, timid, quarrelsome, innocent, ambitious, wise, good-natured, bright, conceited, generous, thrifty, cruel, talkative, stupid, friendly,

<b>Animal</b>	<b>Attribute normally given by man</b>	<b>Role on Animal Farm (during Major's speech and later on)</b>	<b>Evidence, Page references</b>
pigs			
hens			
dogs			
pigeons			
sheep			
cows			
horses			
goat			
donkey			
ducklings			
cat			
raven			
rats			
rabbits			

### Task 3: Old Major's Speech

Reread Old Major's Speech. It can be divided up into eight different parts showing a clear, logical build-up. Mark the parts in the margin and find a heading for each part.

Then sum up the *Principles of Animalism* in a list.

All the animals were now present except Moses, the tame raven, who slept on a perch behind the back door. When Major saw that they had all made themselves comfortable and were waiting attentively, he cleared his throat and began:

"Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you.

"Now, comrades, what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short. We are born, we are given just so much food as will keep the breath in our bodies, and those of us who are capable of it are forced to work to the last atom of our strength; and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery: that is the plain truth.

"But is this simply part of the order of nature? Is it because this land of ours is so poor that it cannot afford a decent life to those who dwell upon it? No, comrades, a thousand times no! The soil of England is fertile, its climate is good, it is capable of affording food in abundance to an enormously greater number of animals than now inhabit it. This single farm of ours would support a dozen horses, twenty cows, hundreds of sheep—and all of them living in a comfort and a dignity that are now almost beyond our imagining. Why then do we continue in this miserable condition? Because nearly the whole of the produce of our labour is stolen from us by human beings. There, comrades, is the answer to all our problems. It is summed up in a single word—Man. Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever.

"Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals. He sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving, and the rest he keeps for himself. Our labour tills the soil, our dung fertilises it, and yet there is not one of us that owns more than his bare skin. You cows that I see before me, how many thousands of gallons of milk have you given during this last year? And what has happened to that milk which should have been breeding up sturdy calves? Every drop of it has gone down the throats of our enemies. And you hens, how many eggs have you laid in this last year, and how many of those eggs ever hatched into chickens? The rest have all gone to market to bring in money for Jones and his men. And you, Clover, where are those four foals you bore, who should have been the support and pleasure of your old age? Each was sold at a year old—you will never see one of them again. In return for your four confinements and all your labour in the fields, what have you ever had except your bare rations and a stall?

"And even the miserable lives we lead are not allowed to reach their natural span. For myself I do not grumble, for I am one of the lucky ones. I am twelve years old and have had over four hundred children. Such is the natural life of a pig. But no animal escapes the cruel knife in the end. You young porkers who are sitting in front of me, every one of you will scream your lives

out at the block within a year. To that horror we all must come—cows, pigs, hens, sheep, everyone. Even the horses and the dogs have no better fate. You, Boxer, the very day that those great muscles of yours lose their power, Jones will sell you to the knacker, who will cut your throat and boil you down for the foxhounds. As for the dogs, when they grow old and toothless, Jones ties a brick round their necks and drowns them in the nearest pond.

"Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free. What then must we do? Why, work night and day, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrades: Rebellion! I do not know when that Rebellion will come, it might be in a week or in a hundred years, but I know, as surely as I see this straw beneath my feet, that sooner or later justice will be done. Fix your eyes on that, comrades, throughout the short remainder of your lives! And above all, pass on this message of mine to those who come after you, so that future generations shall carry on the struggle until it is victorious.

"And remember, comrades, your resolution must never falter. No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have a common interest, that the prosperity of the one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies. Man serves the interests of no creature except himself. And among us animals let there be perfect unity, perfect comradeship in the struggle. All men are enemies. All animals are comrades." At this moment there was a tremendous uproar. While Major was speaking four large rats had crept out of their holes and were sitting on their hindquarters, listening to him. The dogs had suddenly caught sight of them, and it was only by a swift dash for their holes that the rats saved their lives. Major raised his trotter for silence.

"Comrades," he said, "here is a point that must be settled. The wild creatures, such as rats and rabbits—are they our friends or our enemies? Let us put it to the vote. I propose this question to the meeting: Are rats comrades?"

The vote was taken at once, and it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that rats were comrades. There were only four dissentients, the three dogs and the cat, who was afterwards discovered to have voted on both sides. Major continued:

"I have little more to say. I merely repeat, remember always your duty of enmity towards Man and all his ways. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend. And remember also that in fighting against Man, we must not come to resemble him. Even when you have conquered him, do not adopt his vices. No animal must ever live in a house, or sleep in a bed, or wear clothes, or drink alcohol, or smoke tobacco, or touch money, or engage in trade. All the habits of Man are evil. And, above all, no animal must ever tyrannise over his own kind. Weak or strong, clever or simple, we are all brothers. No animal must ever kill any other animal. All animals are equal.

"And now, comrades, I will tell you about my dream of last night. I cannot describe that dream to you. It was a dream of the earth as it will be when Man has vanished. But it reminded me of something that I had long forgotten. Many years ago, when I was a little pig, my mother and the other sows used to sing an old song of which they knew only the tune and the first three words. I had known that tune in my infancy, but it had long since passed out of my mind. Last night, however, it came back to me in my dream. And what is more, the words of the song also came back—words, I am certain, which were sung by the animals of long ago and have been lost to memory for generations. I will sing you that song now, comrades. I am old and my voice is hoarse, but when I have taught you the tune, you can sing it better for yourselves. It is called *Beasts of England*."

Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing. As he had said, his voice was hoarse, but he sang well enough, and it was a stirring tune, something between *Clementine* and *La Cucaracha*. The words ran:

*Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,  
Beasts of every land and clime,  
Hearken to my joyful tidings  
Of the golden future time.  
Soon or late the day is coming,  
Tyrant Man shall be o'erthrown,  
And the fruitful fields of England  
Shall be trod by beasts alone.  
Rings shall vanish from our noses,  
And the harness from our back,  
Bit and spur shall rust forever,  
Cruel whips no more shall crack.  
Riches more than mind can picture,  
Wheat and barley, oats and hay,  
Clover, beans, and mangel-wurzels  
Shall be ours upon that day.  
Bright will shine the fields of England,  
Purer shall its waters be,  
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes  
On the day that sets us free.  
For that day we all must labour,  
Though we die before it break;  
Cows and horses, geese and turkeys,  
All must toil for freedom's sake.  
Beasts of England, beasts of Ireland,  
Beasts of every land and clime,  
Hearken well and spread my tidings  
Of the golden future time.*

## Task 4: Old Major's audience – a cross section of human society (part 2)

Use your notes of task 2 and your reading diary to answer the following questions bearing in mind that *Animal Farm* is a fable in which each animal type represents a particular human type.

Questions: (answer on a separate sheet)

- What do we learn about Old Major, the oldest pig on the farm?
- What can we deduce from the fact that the pigs and the dogs occupy the best places in the audience?
- In any society there are many different types to be observed. Which animals seem to represent the middle class?
- Which two animals appear last in the barn?
- What is their role in society?
- Who does not turn up at the meeting?
- Who in your opinion are the most important animals on the farm?

Now ask your teacher for the solution sheet and compare your answers with the solutions.

## Chapter II

### Task 5: *Rebellion at Manor Farm*

Use this headline and write a short newspaper article for the *Willington Tribune*. Bear in mind that the language used in news items is different from that in the story. ( about 200 words)

### Task 6: **Changes**

List the changes that resulted from the rebellion.

e.g. Traces of Jones' reign like chains, whips and knives were disposed of.

## Task 7: The Seven Commandments

The seven commandments contain the most important laws of animalism. Major's wish was that the animals should not be corrupted by contact with humans or the adoption of their habits. List the seven commandments. As you go along you will see that the pigs start breaking them at a very early stage. Note all these violations (keywords) and add the page numbers under the commandment that was broken.

The Seven Commandments	
1.	Violations:
2.	Violations:
3.	Violations:
4.	Violations:
5.	Violations:
6.	Violations:
7.	Violations:

## Task 8: Character portraits

Start collecting information about the main characters in the story. Keep a separate page for each of these animals so that you can add information as you continue reading. Start with the characters' names and note down your associations with it. Orwell chose these names very consciously and was aware of the symbolism associated with them. As you go along note interesting facts about the animals' behavior, their attitudes and their role on Animal Farm. Always note page references in order to locate specific quotes later.

Compare your notes and associations in the readers' conferences.

By the end of the project you must have character portraits of the following animals:

### **Old Major**

Boxer

Clover

Mollie

Benjamin

**Napoleon**

**Snowball**

**Squealer**

## Chapter III

### Task 9: Reread Squealer's speech.

Read it aloud to your partners as if you were actually giving the speech to a large audience. Slip into Squealer's role. How does he behave? Consider gestures, facial expression, voice, posture...

Find five adjectives or nouns to describe Squealer as you see him after this speech and add them onto your 'Squealer'-page.

What does his name tell us? Check the verb 'to squeal' in your dictionary and add a sample phrase to your vocab list.

"Comrades!" he cried. "You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege? Many of us actually dislike milk and apples. I dislike them myself. Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by Science, comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. We pigs are brainworkers. The whole management and organisation of this farm depend on us. Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for your sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades," cried Squealer almost pleadingly, skipping from side to side and whisking his tail, "surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back?"

**Task 10: After chapter X**

Only very few animals can remember the old days before the Rebellion. Most of them have died and only Clover, Benjamin, Moses and some pigs are left over from the old times. The farm is run more efficiently and is getting more and more prosperous. The windmill has been completed. Electricity is not used for the animals' benefit but to work a corn mill. And a second windmill is being built. The animals work as hard as ever and the old promises concerning warm stables, etc. being strictly against Animalism anyway have long been forgotten.

The farm is richer but the animals are as poor as ever, they work harder for less pay and the surplus goes to the pigs and the dogs, just as it used to go to Jones in former times.

Draw a graph of the developments on Animal Farm. Use two colors, one for the situation of the Farm, another one for the situation of the animals.

Excellent

Bad   Jones' time   Rebellion   Battle of Cowshed   Battle of Windmill   Years later

**Task 11:**

The literary form of *Animal Farm*

**Notes**

*Animal Farm* has been described as an allegory, a fable and a satire.

Look at the definitions below and highlight all the elements that apply to *Animal Farm*. Write short explanatory notes in the margin.

**Allegory**, fictional literary narrative or artistic expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. Allegory has also been defined as an extended metaphor. The symbolic meaning is usually expressed through personifications and other symbols. Related forms are the fable and the parable, which are didactic, comparatively short and simple allegories.

**Fable**, short literary composition in prose or verse, conveying a universal cautionary or moral truth. The moral is usually summed up at the end of the story, which generally tells of conflict among animals that are given the attributes of human beings. The fable differs from the parable, also a short narrative designed to convey a moral truth, in that the fable is concerned with the impossible and improbable, whereas the parable always deals with possible events. Both fables and parables are forms of allegory.

**Satire**, in literature, prose or verse that employs wit in the form of irony, innuendo, or outright derision to expose human wickedness and folly. Satires are intended to tax weaknesses and to correct vice wherever found.

## Task 12: Propaganda

On Animal Farm propaganda has been used excessively to gain power and control the masses. Squealer could be said to be the 'minister of propaganda' on the farm.

Answer to following questions to understand his tricks and methods. (Use a separate sheet.)

- When does Squealer, the 'minister of propaganda, appear? When is he absent?
- What are the tricks of his profession? In what ways is he useful to the ruling class?
- Analyze those verbal expressions which characterize his propagandist machinations as well as the animals' reactions to them. Choose a few specific examples of Squealer's speeches.

Then compare your findings with the solution sheet. At this point you might also be interested in finding out more about methods of propaganda. Read some of the information provided on the teacher's desk or check one of the following internet sites. If you want to earn extra points summarize your findings (200-300 words).

### Recognizing Propaganda

<http://www.uvm.edu/~jleonard/AGRI183/propoaganda.html>

## Task 13: Historical Context

Who is Who on Animal Farm?

Read the following extracts from a History book and relate these incidents to *Animal Farm*. Find out who is who in this novel.

Name in novel	Role	Name in History
Old Major	<i>prophet of the revolution,</i>	<i>Lenin</i>
Napoleon		
Snowball		
Squealer		
Moses		
Mr. Jones		
Manor Farm		
Animal Farm		

Lenin was a fanatic in politics. Stalin is a mechanic in politics. Lenin believed. Stalin had passion but not fanaticism. His passion is for destruction, construction and power but not for improvements in human society or in the human being. Stalin has no vision of the perfect man; he craves the perfect robot. Lenin was no romantic in the German mystic, myth-loving sense, but he was inspired by a dream of a new society; he had Utopia even though his means were sordid and violent and hence self-defeating. There is no romance in Stalin, no Utopia. ....Stalin has some of Lenin in him but more of Hitler.

Lenin admitted his mistakes in public. He had enough authority to weather mistakes. But in a speech on January 26, 1924, Stalin said Lenin was 'always right'. This made it possible for Stalin to claim the same perfection. Stalin cannot err; the Communist state can do no wrong. That is the Kremlin credo. It sentences intelligence to death. The only permissible mental process in Stalin's Russia is the justification of what the government has already done. Stalin's infallibility makes the purge a permanent feature of Soviet life. Since the dictator is infallible, the system he has created is infallible, the more so since it is based on an infallible doctrine. Therefore if anything goes wrong in the Soviet Union it must be due to the ill will of a subordinate who maliciously perverts the system. And that is treason. It recognizes only heresy or hostility. Hence the perpetual purge. The purge is a device to deflect blame from Stalin.

The older generation remembered Trotsky as the young man who appeared suddenly, like a bright star, during the 1905 anti-monarchist revolution. The younger generation fought victoriously under Trotsky in the 1918-1920 civil war. His personality, if theatrical, had a strong public appeal. His presence excited. His speeches excited. His speeches stirred the heart and brain. The country coupled Trotsky with Lenin as the two men who made the 1917 revolution. Today Trotsky is passed over in silence by Russian historians. Stalin himself laid the basis for this falsification of history: 'All the critical work of organizing the insurrection,' Stalin wrote in the Pravda on November 7, 1918, the first anniversary of the Bolshevik insurrection, 'was conducted under the immediate direction of comrade Trotsky.' But in his book 'History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), first published anonymously in 1938 and then under his name, Trotsky disappears altogether as an active organizer of the revolution; the little he did was in order 'to disrupt and destroy'.

If Stalin had the charm to win he might dispense with some of his power to kill. But he is a poor speaker. His voice is colourless. He drinks water after every short paragraph and keeps pumping his forearm up and down for emphasis. Nor does he exude personal warmth. He cannot evoke devotion. He therefore depends on fear. He has it and he communicates it to others.

Trotsky was banished from Russia in January 1928. He went into exile and was assassinated in Mexico in 1940.. Stalin adopted Trotsky's original conception of industrializing Russia one year later.

In 1919, Trotsky complained to Lenin that Stalin had been drinking wine from the well-stocked cellars of the Czar in the Kremlin.