



## Source 1

**Statement about targets for heavy industry in the USSR, January 1938**  
(Catalogue ref: FO 371/22292)

### Questions

1. By how much did output in 1937 exceed output in 1936?
2. What reasons are given for missing the 1937 output target?
3. According to this statement, will they achieve the output target for 1938?
4. What conclusions about the success of the Five Year Plans can you draw from this source?



# HEROES & VILLAINS

Stalin & industrialisation > Was this a success?

## Source 1

HEAVY INDUSTRY PLAN for 1938

Order No.20 of the People's Commissariat for Heavy Industry  
dated January 21st 1938 ("Industria" January 29th)

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The output of heavy industry in 1938, according to the official plan for the year, is to be sixteen per cent higher than the actual output in 1937. According to preliminary returns, output in 1937 exceeded that in 1936 by 6.8 per cent, and this increase was almost entirely due to an increase in labour productivity amounting to 6.7 per cent. In spite of this increase, the plan for 1937 was only carried out to the extent of 88.9 percent.

The worst results were obtained in non-ferrous metallurgy, particularly the copper industry; the tube industry and cement industry also worked badly throughout the year. In some sections, particularly the coal industry, there was a definite improvement towards the end of the year, but neither in coal nor in iron and steel were the year's plans fulfilled. This was due to the fact that steps were not taken to organise mass Stakhanovist movements, so that many enterprises employing some Stakhanovites who fulfilled their norms by 150 to 200 per cent were still unable to fulfil output plans. Labour organisation suffered not only from the activities of wreckers, but from the effects of technical inaccuracy, uncleanliness and lack of labour discipline.

Technical-productive tasks were undertaken in a spirit of office routine, and as though of secondary importance. Supply of raw materials, fuel etc. was badly organised, and was further complicated by attempts of some concerns to obtain supplies of which they already had ample stocks. Little attention was paid to the reduction of production costs, and over-consumption of raw material and fuel was accompanied by the production of "brak!" and over-payment of wages: as a result, production costs in 1937 actually increased, and the financial situation of the industry deteriorated.