



Source 2

Extracts from a German newspaper article on inconsistencies in official Soviet production figures, December 1937
(Catalogue ref: FO 371/22292)

Questions

1. According to this source, what was wrong with the 1937 Soviet production figures?
2. How would you describe the attitude of this source towards the Soviet government and its reporting of production figures? Choose three phrases from the source to support your answer.
3. 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 2

PLAN for 1938 39

(Article entitled "Fictitious Rouble Figures", from
the "Frankfurter Zeitung" of December 19th).

The total value of the planned production is given as 84.3 milliard roubles, as compared with the plan figure of 103 milliard roubles for 1937. The Soviet Government make the astonishing statement that this represents an increase of 15.3 per cent over 1937. If a reduction of almost 19 milliard roubles represents a 15 per cent increase, one is left with the conclusion that the comparison is made with the actual production for 1937, which must obviously have been far below the planned figure of 103 milliards. The actual production in 1937, on this basis, must have been only 73.1 milliard roubles, or almost 30 per cent below plan.

This apparent situation does not prevent the Soviet Government from talking about the industrial growth achieved in 1937, nor the "Pravda" from hailing the plan as a further proof of the increasing strength of the Soviet Union and developing well-being of the population. Presumably they have failed to observe how clearly the serious condition of Soviet industry is reflected even in the figures now published. At a time when one crisis follows another, and when the optimistically produced plans set the anticipated industrial progress lower than ever before, Soviet propaganda artlessly announces the plan to the world as a demonstration of the advantages of the Soviet system.

On the basis of the published plan, Soviet planned and effective production in recent years were as follows:

Total Production in Milliard Roubles	1935	1936	1937	1938
Plan	62.5	85.8	103	84.3
Actual production	65.9	70.1	73.1	

Concerning production in 1936, Soviet returns are contradictory. The Central Administration for Economic Statistics, which on January 22nd 1937 announced the value as 70.1 milliard roubles, later announced in connection with the 20th anniversary celebrations, that large-scale industry alone produced in 1936 goods valued at 80.9 milliard roubles. If this figure is correct, then in spite of Stakhanovism and all other methods of stimulation, there must have been a considerable setback in 1937. If one takes the lower figure, a very modest increase in output is shown for this much-vaunted year.