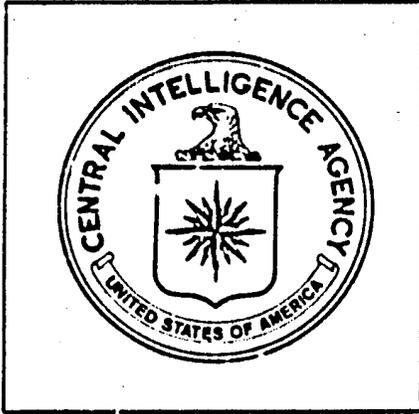


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Tcl'yatti: A New Generation Soviet City

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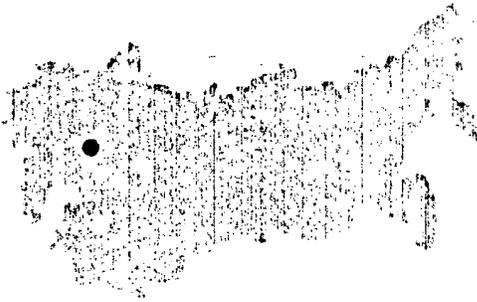
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TOL'YATTI: A NEW GENERATION SOVIET CITY

Urban population in the Soviet Union increased more than five-fold between 1930 and 1976, and about 40 percent of this growth was contributed by new cities. Tol'yatti, with its innovative design, exemplifies the new generation of Soviet urban centers founded since World War II. This city on the middle Volga has been one of the fastest growing in the Soviet Union, expanding from 72,000 in 1959 to 463,000 in 1976. Tol'yatti's easy access by rail and river and its abundant supplies of cheap energy led Soviet planners to establish there the nation's largest automobile manufacturing plant and a burgeoning petrochemical industry.

The automobile plant is Tol'yatti's largest economic activity, employing more than 85,000 workers. Constructed with Italian and other Western assistance, it produces the Zhiguli, a Soviet version of the Italian Fiat. Its annual output of 660,000 autos represents about 60 percent of the total Soviet passenger car production.

A large petrochemical complex, the city's other major industry, was a governing factor in the recent selection of Tol'yatti as the site of four fertilizer plants. Scheduled to be built by mid-1979, each is slated to produce 1,360 metric tons of ammonia fertilizer per day.

Even the older part of Tol'yatti (called Stavropol' until it was renamed in 1964 for the Italian Communist leader) is of relatively recent vintage, having been established in the 1950s (Figure 1). Construction of the new portion of Tol'yatti, designed as a residential area for 200,000, began in 1967; its current population is 170,000.

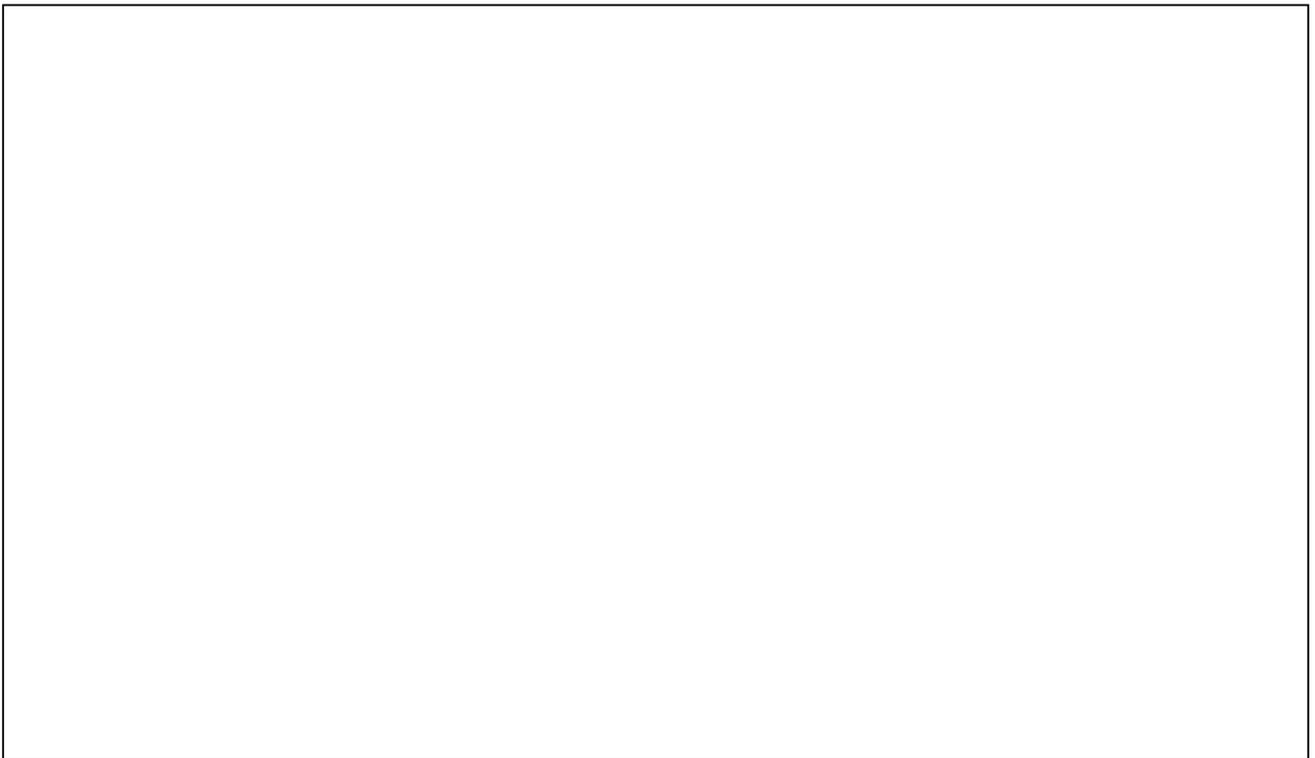
The new city lies 6 kilometers west of the older city between the huge Zhiguli auto plant and the Volga River 3 kilometers to the south. Some 2 million square meters of living space have already been constructed, and new housing is being added at an annual rate of 400,000 square meters. Forty thousand living units have been constructed for the auto plant workers alone.

Throughout the new city, prefabricated buildings of different length, height (varying from 5 to 16 floors), and configuration have been grouped to produce a blocked-in effect designed to afford some protection from bitter winds and an average winter temperature of -12° C.

In Tol'yatti, as in other cities, the USSR is exerting intensive efforts to create a pollution-free environment. A modern 220,000-cubic-meter-per-day biological sewage treatment plant, which complements an older facility, handles wastes from the new city and the auto plant. Plans call for complete recycling of waste water at the auto plant—a complex and expensive process. Visiting U.S. Environmental Protection Agency personnel found that air pollution control devices at this plant are efficient and employ advanced technology, but air pollution problems have evidently not been entirely solved (Figure 2).

Buses, intended to minimize the need for private automobiles and thereby reduce pollution, are the basic form of transportation in Tol'yatti. Some 800 high speed buses carry workers to the auto plant in 20 minutes or less. U.S. urban experts indicate that few large plants in the world can boast of almost all workers living in decent housing only minutes from work and also close to major recreational facilities such as a stadium, parkland, beaches, and boating. There are currently only 2,500 autos in the city, or about 1 car for every 175 residents—a paradox in the Soviet Union's auto capital.*

*By comparison, there is about 1 car per 64 persons in the USSR as a whole, and 1 car per 2.5 persons in the United States.



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Tol'yatti is the model for Naberezhnyye Chelny, some 300 kilometers to the northeast. This city is in an earlier stage of development but already has 200,000 residents. It is the site of what will be the world's largest truck plant, now under construction within a half-hour commuting distance of the workers' residential districts.

Soviet authorities consider Tol'yatti and Naberezhnyye Chelny model cities. U.S. urban experts, however, continue to be critical of the poor quality of housing construction, generally below Western standards there and throughout the USSR. Tol'yatti and Naberezhnyye Chelny are drab, uniform, colorless, poorly landscaped, and lack the variety apparent in comparable Western European cities. Soviet urban officials lament that the country's beleaguered housing program is hampered by over-hasty construction, inadequate funds, and shortage of skilled labor.

Since the 1917 Revolution, well over 1,000 cities have been founded in the USSR, and this trend is expected to continue at a rate of 20 to 25 per year. But even this rate combined with continued expansion of older cities will not satisfy the USSR's critical housing shortage. New cities, already expensive in the developed parts of the European USSR, cost far more to build in Siberia and the Soviet Far East, where many will be needed to support the planned expansion of resource exploitation in those areas. Notwithstanding the expense and shortcomings of new cities such as Tol'yatti, their construction will probably continue as Soviet leaders seek to upgrade the urban standard of living.

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