**About Great Russian Cities**

Arkhangelsk, also Archangel, city, northern European Russia, capital of Arkhangelsk Oblast, on the Northern Dvina (Severnaya Dvina) River, near the White Sea (Beloye More). It is a major seaport, although icebound in winter months. The city is also a trade and processing center for an important timber-producing region. A maritime school, a forestry institute, and a regional museum are located here.

Arkhangelsk was the chief Russian seaport from its founding (1584) as Novo-Kholmogory until the building of the Baltic port of Saint Petersburg in 1703. It received its present name in 1613. The city declined in the 18th century, but trade revived at the end of the 19th century, when a railroad to Moscow was completed. During World Wars I and II Arkhangel-sk was a major port of entry for Allied aid. The city resisted Bolshevik rule during 1918-20 and was a stronghold of the White Army, supported by Allied forces.

Blagoveshchensk, city in far eastern Russia and capital of Amur Oblast. Located at the confluence of the Amur and Zeya rivers, Blagoveshchensk lies on the border of Russia and China. Its river port promoted the development of the shipbuilding and ship repair industries. Its proximity to deposits of important natural resources stimulated the growth of the production of equipment for the coal and gold mining industries. Other firms produce electrical equipment, paper, furniture, clothes, alcoholic beverages, and meat products. Dairy and milling are also important aspects of the economy. Blagoveshchensk serves an important transportation role in the regional economy; in addition to its river port, the city is the final station on a railroad spur from the Trans-Siberian Railway. The city has numerous educational institutions, including schools of agriculture, teaching, and medicine. The city also has theaters for drama and puppetry and a museum of regional history. Blagoveshchensk was founded in 1856 as a military outpost at the mouth of the Zeya River. The city was constructed with wide, tree-lined streets; recent urban development has emphasized zones with large apartment complexes outside of the city center.

Irkutsk, city, southern Siberian Russia, capital of Irkutsk Oblast, at the confluence of the Irkut and Angara rivers. It is a major industrial and commercial center served by the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Manufactures include aircraft, motor vehicles, textiles, building materials, mining equipment, and leather goods. A large hydroelectric facility is here. A regional cultural center, the city has history and art museums, theaters, a symphony orchestra, and several institutions of higher learning, including a university.

Irkutsk was founded in 1652 as a cossack outpost and developed as a fur- and gold-trading center on the route to Mongolia and China; it was also used by the Russian government as a place of exile. Industrialization accelerated after the coming of the Trans-Siberian Railroad in 1898.

Kaliningrad, formerly Kцnigsberg, city, western Russia, on the Pregolya River. The capital of Kaliningrad Oblast, it is a major industrial and commercial center, connected by channel with Baltiysk, an ice-free port on the Baltic Sea. Among its principal manufactures are ships, machinery, chemicals, paper, and lumber. Historic landmarks in Kaliningrad include the Schloss, or Castle (1255), and a cathedral (14th century). The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, a native of the city, taught at its university (now Kaliningrad State University), which was established in 1544.

The city, founded in 1255 as a fortress by the Teutonic Knights, became a member of the Hanseatic League in 1340. From 1457 to 1525 it was the official seat of the grand master of the Teutonic Knights, and from 1525 to (1618) it was the residence of the dukes of Prussia. Frederick I was crowned as the first king of Prussia in the chapel of the Schloss in 1701. During World War I (1914-18) the city was the scene of heavy fighting between the Germans and the Russians. Following the war it was made the capital of the German province of East Prussia. The city was severely damaged in World War II (1945-45), and in 1945, after a two-month siege, it was occupied by Soviet troops. By agreement among the Allies at the Potsdam Conference (1945) the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) annexed the city and surrounding territory. In 1946 the city's name was changed from Kцnigsberg to Kaliningrad, in honor of the Soviet leader M. I. Kalinin.

Kazan, city in central European Russia, capital of the republic of Tatarstan, and a port at the confluence of the Volga and Kazanka rivers. Kazan- is a major industrial, commercial, and cultural center. Manufactured products include machinery, refined petroleum, chemicals, building materials, processed food, footwear, soap, and textiles. Once a prominent Muslim city, Kazan remains a center of Tatar culture (see Tatars). It is the site of Kazan State University (founded in 1804), where Leo Tolstoy and Vladimir Ilich Lenin studied, and several technical schools. Notable structures include the kremlin (citadel), the oldest part of which dates from the 15th century; a 16th-century church; and two 18th-century mosques.

Kazan was founded in the late 14th century and soon became the capital of a powerful Tatar khanate. In 1552 the city was annexed by Russia under Ivan IV Vasilyevich. It was largely destroyed in 1774 during a revolt by troops under the leadership of the cossack soldier Yemelyan Pugachov, but was rebuilt soon thereafter, during the reign of Catherine the Great.

Murmansk, city, northwestern Russia, the largest city in the world north of the Arctic Circle. Situated on Kola Inlet, an arm of the Barents Sea, the city is an important port with an ice-free harbor. It is the capital of Murmansk Oblast. Murmansk is a Russian naval base and has major shipbuilding and fish-processing facilities. It is the seat of institutes of oceanography and polar research.

Murmansk was founded in 1915, during World War I, as a port of entry for Allied supplies after Russian ports on the Black and Baltic seas had been closed. In 1916 it was linked by rail with Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg). After the Russian Revolution, an Allied force briefly occupied Murmansk, and it was an Allied port of entry in World War II (1939-45).

Nizhnevartovsk, city in northeastern Russia, in western Siberia. Nizhnevartovsk is part of Khantia-Mansia, an autonomous okrug within Tyumen- Oblast, and is located along the Ob- River. The city grew in economic importance in the 1970s as a service center for the local oil industry. The Samotlar oil basin, an important source of oil, is located in the region, and oil and natural gas pipelines cross the city. Additional industry in the city includes timber, construction materials, and food. Transportation to the city is limited, although there is a railroad station. There is a regional history museum in Nizhnevartovsk.

During the time of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Soviet central planners concentrated resources in several cities, including Nizhnevartovsk and Surgut, to promote the growth of the Siberian oil industry. The labor intensive nature of oil production during the Soviet period spurred dramatic population growth in the city. In 1970, prior to the birth of the industry, the population of the city was only 16,000. By the end of the decade the city had grown to 109,000, and by the end of the 1980s the city had again more than doubled, to 242,000. By 1979 the city had grown to more than three times the size Soviet planners had expected, causing serious housing and infrastructure shortages. The population of the city is currently declining, most likely due to economic difficulties in the oil industry.

Nizhniy Novgorod, city in western Russia, at the confluence of the Oka and Volga rivers. Nizhniy Novgorod is a major river port, railroad hub, and industrial center. The city is the site of one of the largest automobile factories in Russia, and its manufactures also include aircraft, textiles, and railroad and electric equipment. Nizhniy Novgorod has libraries, museums, a large university, and several technical schools. Historical structures include a stone kremlin (citadel) built in the 13th century, two 13th-century churches, and a 17th-century palace. Nizhniy Novgorod was founded in 1221. In the late 14th century the city was plundered by the Tatars before being annexed by Moscow in 1392. Important for its trade with Asia, the city became famous for its trade fairs, held annually from 1817 until 1917. From 1932 to 1991 it was named Gorkiy (also spelled Gorky or Gorki) in honor of the Russian writer Maksim Gorkiy, who was born in the city.

Novgorod, city, capital of Novgorod Oblast, western Russia, on the Volkhov River, near Lake Il-men-. It is the commercial center for a rich farm region, and industries here produce fertilizer, processed food, furniture, and china. Novgorod retains examples of early Russian architecture, including a kremlin (citadel) and the Cathedral of Saint Sophia (both 11th century).

One of the oldest cities in Russia, Novgorod was founded as early as the 5th or 6th century. Rurik, founder of the Russian monarchy, became prince of Novgorod in 862. In 1136 the city achieved independence from Kyyiv (Kiev) and, with a democratic form of government, became the capital of sovereign Great Novgorod. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Novgorod flourished as a trade outpost of the Hanseatic League and was a major cultural center. It repulsed Tatar invasions in the late 13th century. In 1478 the city was annexed by its rival, Moscow, under Ivan III. The city declined as a trading center after the establishment of nearby Saint Petersburg in 1703. During the German occupation (1941-44) of World War II, the city was severely damaged.

Rostov-na-Donu, also Rostov-on-Don, or Rostov, city, southwestern European Russia, capital of Rostov Oblast. Situated on a high bank of the Don River near its mouth on the Sea of Azov, the city is an important commercial, industrial, and transportation center. It is connected by a deepwater canal to the Sea of Azov, and by the Volga-Don Canal to the Caspian, Baltic, and White seas. The city is also linked by pipeline with the petroleum fields of the Caucasus region. Manufactures include ships, chemicals, agricultural machinery, electric equipment, and building materials. Several institutions of higher learning, including a university, are in Rostov-na-Donu.

In 1749 a customs office was established on the site of present-day Rostov-na-Donu. A fortress was built here in 1761, and in 1797 the settlement achieved city status. In the 19th century it grew as an important trading port. During World War II the city was held twice (1941, 1942-1943) by German forces and was damaged considerably.

Saransk, city in central European Russia, capital of the republic of Mordovia. Saransk is located along the Insar River in the Volga River basin, about 630 km (about 390 mi) east of Moscow. Industrial activity in Saransk includes the production of electrical cables, chemicals, decorative cloth, and food products; machine building, and metalworking. The city also has two thermal power stations. Saransk has had a train station since 1893, currently located on the Rusaevka-Kazan- rail route, and is located along a highway. Saransk has many historic architectural sites stemming from its early settlement in 1641 as a fortress for the southeastern border of the Russian State. Soviet planners reconstructed the old city center in the 1960s and 1970s, adding wide streets and planning the construction of massive residential areas. Saransk has several theaters: a drama theater (founded in 1961), a puppet theater, and a comedy theater. It also has a regional history museum and a museum of painting. The Mordovian State University (founded in 1957) is located in Saransk as well as several technical schools.

Stavropol, city in southern European Russia, capital of Stavropol- Territory (Kray), in an area known as Caucasia. Since the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, Stavropol- has attracted many refugees from neighboring regions as a result of political and economic chaos and armed conflict near Russia's borders. The city's economy is concentrated on heavy industry; it has factories that produce automobiles, cranes, furniture, and reinforced concrete. Light industry is also represented with the production of shoes and dairy products. Stavropol- has air, rail (the Kavkazskaya-Divnoe-Elista rail line), and highway connections to other major cities. It is also linked by bus routes within northern Caucasia. Buses provide important linkages because of the mountainous nature of the area. The city has technical-training institutes for medicine, education, art, and construction. The city was founded in 1777 as a fort for the Russian army. It was established as a city in 1785, and in 1822 became the center of the North Caucasus Territory. From 1935 to 1943 it was known as Voroshilovsk.

Syktyvkar, city in northern Russia, capital of Komi republic, Syktyvkar is located along the Sysola River near its confluence with the Vychegda River about 1200 km (about 744 mi) northeast of Moscow. Since the 1960s, the city's economy has focused on the timber industry and includes the production of cellulose, paper, and wood furniture. Additional industry includes the food industry (flour milling, meat, and dairy), light industry (leather shoes, textiles), and construction materials. Lying outside Russia's power network, Syktyvkar has a thermal power plant to serve its energy needs. Because of its extreme northerly location the city has few transportation links; it is, however, the final station on a rail spur from the city of Mikun-. Syktyvkar University (founded in 1972) is located in the city and there are several training institutes for the cellulose industry and the fields of medicine, music, and education. The city has a drama theater and two museums. Syktyvkar was settled as Ust--Sysol-sk in 1586 and was named Syktyvkar in 1930. Most likely due to its extreme northerly location and restructuring in the cellulose industry, the city is one of many in the far north that have lost population since the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad, city, capital of Volgograd Oblast, southwestern Russia, on the Volga River. Volgograd, an important industrial, commercial, and transshipment center of Russia, is a railroad hub and a major Volga River port. It is linked to the Don River by the Volga-Don Canal, constructed between 1950 and 1957. A large hydroelectric power dam is just north of the city. Among the main industries in Volgograd are petroleum refining, shipbuilding, and the manufacture of aluminum, chemicals, processed food, farm machinery, iron and steel, and forest products. The University of Volgograd (1980) is located in the city.

Volgograd was founded in 1589 as Tsaritsyn, a fortress on the southeastern frontier of Russia. It was taken by cossack rebels twice: in 1670 by Stenka Razin and in 1774 by Yemelyan Pugachov. With the expansion of the Russian Empire in the 19th century, Tsaritsyn became an important port for products shipped down the Volga River. Early in the Russian Revolution, in 1917, the city was taken by the Bolsheviks. During the civil war that followed it was occupied by White Russian troops for three months in 1919. In 1925 the city was renamed Stalingrad, for Joseph Stalin, who had been notable in the defense of the city against the White Russians.

During World War II, Stalingrad, a strategically located industrial center, was a vital German objective. A large German force mounted an assault on the city on August 20, 1942, after a period of heavy air raids. A successful Soviet counteroffensive began on November 19, and on February 2, 1943, the Sixth German Army surrendered, thus ending the German advance into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). German casualties alone totaled more than 300,000, and the Soviet city was almost completely destroyed. Reconstruction began immediately after the war. The city was renamed Volgograd in 1961.

Yaroslavl, industrial city, capital of Yaroslavl- Oblast, central European Russia, port and railroad center on the Volga River. Manufactures include refined petroleum, motor vehicles, chemicals, synthetic rubber, machinery, processed food, and textiles. Points of interest in the city include a 13th-century church and monastery and three 17th-century churches containing noteworthy frescoes. Also noteworthy is Yaroslavl- University (1971), which has faculties in the physical and social sciences.

According to tradition, Yaroslavl was founded in the early 11th century by Russian ruler Yaroslav the Wise of Kyyiv. From 1218 to 1463, when it was absorbed by Moscow, Yaroslavl- was the seat of an independent principality. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was an important commercial city on the route between Moscow and Arkhangel-sk. Commerce declined in the 18th century, and the city became known for the manufacture of textiles. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Yaroslavl- was developed as a center of heavy industry.

Yekaterinburg, formerly Sverdlovsk, city, capital of Yekaterinburg Oblast, Russia, on the Iset River. Located on the eastern slope of the Ural Mountains in a mineral-rich region, Yekaterinburg is a major industrial center and a station on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Among the large industrial works located in the city are platinum refineries, copper and iron smelters, and factories producing electrical equipment, chemicals, and heavy machinery. Yekaterinburg's educational institutes include the Urals A. M. Gorkiy State University (1920) and the Yekaterinburg State Medical Institute (1931).

The city was founded in 1721 by Czar Peter I as an ironworking center and was named Yekaterinburg for his wife, who was later proclaimed Empress Catherine I. Industrial development was spurred by the construction of the Great Siberian Highway in the late 18th century and the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the late 19th century. Czar Nicholas II and his family were held captive in the city by the Bolsheviks after the Russian Revolution and were executed here in 1918. The city was renamed Sverdlovsk in 1924 in honor of Bolshevik and Soviet leader Yakov M. Sverdlov. During World War II (1939-1945) industry from threatened European areas of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was transferred here. Following the disintegration of the USSR at the end of 1991, the city's name was changed back to Yekaterinburg.