

Lesson 3 – Life in Eastern Europe and Western Russia

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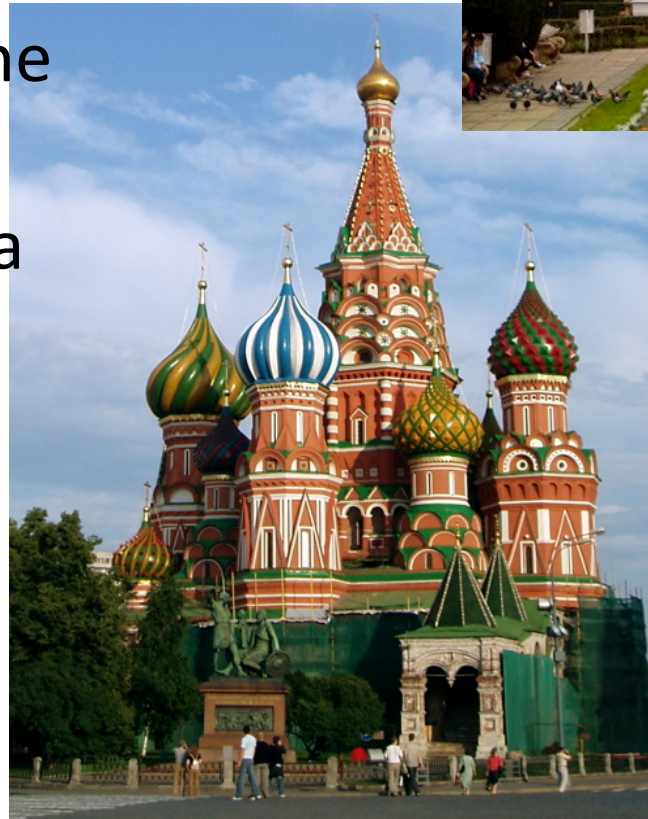
Ethnicities in Eastern Europe & Western Russia

- Ethnic groups: mostly Slavic
- Languages: Slavic languages, but vary by region
 - Alphabet: Cyrillic →

А а (A)	Р р (R)
Б б (B)	С с (S)
В в (V)	Т т (T)
Г г (G)	У у (U)
Д д (D)	Ф ф (F)
Е е (E)	Х х (KH)
Ё ё (YO)	Ц ц (TS)
Ж ж (ZH)	Ч ч (CH)
З з (Z)	Ш ш (SH)
И и (I)	Щ щ (SHCH)
Й й (Y)	Ъ ъ (-)
К к (K)	Ы ы (Y)
Л л (L)	Ь ь (')
М м (M)	Э э (E)
Н н (N)	Ю ю (YU or IU)
О о (O)	Я я (YA or IA)
П п (P)	

Religion in Eastern Europe & Western Russia

- Eastern Orthodox in the central & east →
- Catholic in the west
- Lutheran & Catholic in the Baltics
- Islam in Albania & Bosnia



← St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, Russia

The Source of much Conflict...

Ethnic Groups in Eastern Europe



A History of Ethnic Turmoil

- **Diversity:** Few natural boundaries mean this region has been invaded MANY times in history
 - Many diverse ethnic groups live here and come into conflict
- **Weak governments:** When the USSR collapsed, devolution (a powerful central government gives up power to local governments) led to the rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe.
- **Russian Aggression:** a threat to border states (Ukraine) and to groups in Russia (Chechnya) that want to break away
 - Chechnya's oil reserves & good location are important to Russia's economy, so the government puts down on protests harshly

Economies in Eastern Europe & Western Russia

- Agriculture & forestry
- Some industry, but outdated
- Mining

- Switching from communism to a free market economy has been difficult
 - People own businesses instead of the government, but **oligarchs** (a few powerful, rich people) tend to control the businesses
 - Not enough goods produced
 - Higher unemployment and **inflation** (rising prices) for food & clothing

Environmental concerns in Eastern Europe & Western Russia

- Forests & farmland have been ruined in the rush to build up industries
- Air & Water Pollution
 - smog is causing lung disease & cancer
 - Drinking water is ruined due to chemicals, poor sewer systems, & old chemical weapons in dumps
 - Life expectancy (# of years an average person lives) in Russia is 71 years (ranked #154 in the world)



Regions of Eastern Europe & Western Russia

- Western Russia
- The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania)
- Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, & Hungary
- The Balkans
- The Border States (Belarus, Ukraine, & Moldova)

Russia Today

- Population: 142.4 million, mostly Slavs
- Government: federal republic
 - Powerful President (and former KGB intelligence officer) Vladimir Putin
 - - Has improved Russia's economy and reasserted itself as a world power
 - BUT, limits freedom of speech & the press and dealt harshly with opponents.



The Arts in Russia



- Enjoy the outdoors, sports (hockey, skating, gymnastics), movies/TV, modern music
- Famous for ballet & opera
 - [Peter Tchaikovsky](#)'s *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*
 - [Igor Stravinsky](#)'s *Firebird Suite*
 - Mariinsky Theater →
- [Folk Dancing](#)
- Literature:
 - *War & Peace*, Leo Tolstoy
- Faberge eggs



Russian Food

- Borscht – beet soup
- Shchi – cabbage soup
- Prioshki – meat turnovers
- Caviar
- Boiled potatoes



The Baltic States

(Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania)

- Small populations that were treated harshly when they were taken over by the Soviet Union
 - Used nonviolent resistance to break away



Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, & Hungary

- Countries that lost a lot of territory during WWI & WWII
 - 3 million Polish Jews were killed during the Holocaust, causing a lack of ethnic diversity in Poland



Culture in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, & Hungary

- Major Cities:
 - Budapest, Hungary →
 - Warsaw, Poland
 - Prague, Czech Republic
- Famous Poles:
 - [Frederic Chopin](#), musician
 - Marie Curie, physicist
 - Nicolaus Copernicus



The Balkans: (*Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia*)

- Controlled by the Ottoman Turks for 500 years, then the Soviet Union, 1948-1980s
- Continuing conflict in the region of former Yugoslavia as nationalist groups try to control each country
 - “**Balkanization**” - to split up into small countries that are in conflict with each other
 - Resulted in [ethnic cleansing \(genocide\)](#) removing or murdering other ethnic groups



The Border States

(Belarus, Ukraine, & Moldova)

- 1932-33 Ukrainian “Famine”
 - Soviet leader Josef Stalin starved 7 million Ukrainian farmers who refused to give up their good farmland to the communist system (genocide!)
- 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Meltdown
 - Caused pollution, cancer, & birth defects in Ukraine & Belarus
- Since 2014, Russian troops have occupied eastern Ukraine (22% of Ukraine’s 48 million people are ethnic Russians)
- Folk music – bandura, [hopak dancing](#)

