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YAKUT

>>>> BEGIN FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHIC BOX

Yakut: Jo-koo

Population: 19,000,000 (23,500,000 with metasapient critters, estimated)

Prominent Languages: Russian, Yakut

List of Oblasts: Chuktoka, Kamchatka, Magadan, Sahka, Siberia, Yamalia

Government Type: Isolationist Awakened Socialist State

Bordering Countries: Russia, Trans-Polar Aleut

Geography: The majority of Yakut consists of the swampy West Siberian Plain and the Central Siberian Plateau. The majority of the country is taiga, except for the northernmost sections which are tundra and the recovering grasslands in the south where the permafrost does not extend. Eastern portions of the country contain several mountain ranges, notably the Stanovoy and Verkhoyansk Ranges.

Notable Features: Kamchatka Island, Lake Baykal

>>>> END FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHICS BOX

A BRIEF GEOPOLITICAL HISTORY

Encouraged by remnants of their shamanic culture and their Amerind neighbors in the Trans-Polar Aleut, members of the Yakut, Evenks, and other peoples formed a resistance movement with the aim of establishing an indigenous republic equivalent to the Native American Nations. The Yakut declared itself in 2030 with a series of coordinated attacks designed to isolate the region, with the rebel forces working closely with shapeshifters and spirits.

Russian Interior Army forces fought back against the insurgency, but were hampered by the need to protect the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Yakut forces' guerilla tactics. By 2031, Russia acceded to the loss of its territory, and accepted a tide of refugees from the Yakut, then turned its forces toward the invasion of Poland and the start of the Euro Wars.

A majority of settlements in the Yakut interior were depopulated of their metahuman inhabitants, then structures were torn down and removed to let nature reclaim the space. Wilderness areas were declared off-limits, and severe restrictions were placed on travel, conjuring, and polluting technologies.

The Awakened oligarchy in charge of the state was so severe on the metahuman populace that underground resistance formed. Civil war broke out in 2064 when the Sagan Zaba Brigade seized the area around Lake Baykal, with other rebel groups securing isolated townships in western Sakha. These territories were reclaimed in a two-year campaign by Awakened Yakut forces and metahuman conscripts, and the rebels were forced to flee to Manchuria, where they have set up a government in exile.

The Yakut has few cities, and has a sliding gradation of urban development denoted by population and independence from an agricultural economy. The frozen earth makes construction difficult, so most buildings are relatively low to the ground, and restrictions on metahuman zoning mean that habitations sometimes extend under the frozen earth in extensive subterranean developments. Shapeshifters and a few sasquatch tribes make up a sizable part of the Yakut's population. Individual shapeshifters often adapt to metahuman accommodations, but families and packs prefer vaguely conical buildings similar to non-portable yurts.

Local police and special police units are extensively integrated into communities; the latter investigate and enforce environmental regulations, zoning laws, commercial transactions, vehicular traffic, magic, and immigration. A majority of shapeshifters that are employed are members of the police, though they remain a minority of the total membership.

MAJOR CITIES

Yakutsk (Sahka) is the capital of Yakut, and the administrative center of the nation. A large metahuman bureaucracy is employed to handle the business of distributing food, clothing, fuel, and other goods from state-controlled industries or purchased (at government prices) from private manufacturers as needed to meet the needs of Yakut's isolated urban areas. The rest of Yakutsk's three million metahuman inhabitants are primarily employed in the city's recycling centers, the nearby mines, or its new university district, dominated by the World Mammoth and Permafrost Museum.

Yilbegän Conglomerates, headquartered in Yakutsk, is the only native A-rated corporation in the country, a quasigovernmental corporation that manages the nation's few but exceedingly cleanly-run mining operations and operates barges on the River Lena.

Magadan (Magadan) is a port on the Sea of Okhotsk, connected to Yakutsk by the Road of Bones. As the only city in Yakut easily accessible to foreigners, Magadan has the largest non-Yakut national population in the country—primarily sailors from Trans-Polar Aleut and other nations. The outskirts of the city are dominated by farming communes, and the rest of its economy is supported by mining and a local gold-leafing industry. Magadan is the informal center of the Russian Orthodox Church in Yakut, and the locals have covered the onion-dome of the Orthodox Cathedral Church of the Trinity.

The Magadan Free Trade Zone is Yakut's center of capitalism, where foreign corporations are allowed access to Yakut's markets. Saeder-Krupp, Mitsuhamma, and Evo dominate the local corporate presence, importing approved (i.e. ecologically-sound or sustainable) technologies and materials that the Yakut cannot produce internally in exchange for bulk reagents from the interior wilderness. By some accounts, thirty percent of the world market's raw reagents flow through Magadan every year.

Novy is a nomadic tent city, predominantly populated by the Nenets people. Using a combination of traditional practices (tents, horses) and modern technology (alchemical microfac, GPS), the inhabitants are able to maintain a sustainable lifestyle while accomplishing the task laid on the Nenet tadibya (shamans) by the Awakened oligarchy: monitoring the magical and ecological health of the Yakut, particularly the Pleistocene Park, waste sites for mine tailings, mammoth and humped horse herds, and the Tunguska crater region.

SPECIAL LOCATIONS

Kamchatka Island is claimed by the Yakut, but aside from restricting all metahumans from the island except for the Russian-controlled city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, they have little presence there. The volcanically-active island is part of the Ring of Fire, with numerous manalines criss-crossing the island aspected toward fire magic. Kamchatka Island is also home to a number of paranimals, including firedraka, basilisks, and free fire spirits.

Sagan Zaba ("White Rock") is an archeological and Evenk ceremonial site on Olkhan Island in Lake Baykal, and was the center of the aborted rebel uprising in the area. Reportedly the Yakut forces used metahuman conscripts to overwhelm the rebels on the island, since the shapeshifters refused to venture there. The island remains inhabited by the aboriginal Buryat people, who preserve the site and their simple way of life.

The **Tunguska Crater** was the site of an unexplained explosion in 1908. The repercussions of this event—or as some theoretical magicians suggest, the metahuman belief centered on it—have echoed oddly with the Awakening. Plants in the crater tend to grow abnormally large or stunted, similar to those affected by radiation, and are reportedly a rich source of natural radical reagents, even though the crater itself shows no signs of unusual magical power or radiation. Unconfirmed sources suggest natural mineral radicals and rarer alchemical materials may be found near the crater's center, but access to its interior is restricted to all sapient under Yakut law, and the cordon is enforced by patrolling spirits.

> In case it escaped your notice, Awakened Yakut is prime talislegging territory, provided you don't get eaten by Major Ursa and the Siberian Awakened Militia (that's the shapechanger-led conscript corps, equivalent to the Russian Interior Army).

> Lyran

> Not to mention smuggling. The nineteen million or so citizens of Yakut are so cut off from the world that they'll pay big cred—or the equivalent in reagents, gold, and shapeshifter pelts—for foreign media, silk, chocolate, any alcohol other than vodka and the stuff they make out of brake fluid, refined sugar, and other luxuries.

Getting in and getting out is the problem, of course. The Vory have propped open lines of shipping from Magadan to Yakutsk, and from there can access the interior—some of the shipping containers are offloaded in Magadan and then shipped by truck and barge unopened to distant communities, but without their contacts the shapeshifters can literally sniff out many independents. Petropavlovsk-Chamsky is the true "back door" to the Yakut, if you can manage to make your way across the island, there are fishermen that do little fishing and a good deal of ferrying others to and from the mainland.

> Red Anya

> Or you can go through the Trans-Polar Aleut territories with a t-bird or snowtracked vehicle, provided you can handle the weather and have someplace to refuel. The storms in the Yakut can freeze your engines solid if you're stupid enough to try and fly through them, though, so it's riskier—but the more risk, the more profit. No need to split proceeds with the Vory, and more cargo space than those piddly-ass fishing boats will get you. Oh, and always check into Evo's AngelSat network for the latest ground-photography, if you can hack it. Damn snow can cover up runways.

> Turbo Bunny

> I hear there's a couple rebel cells still active in the cities, if you feel like running weapons, but payment can be an issue since they're mostly running on determination and booze.

> Hard Exit

> Crime isn't exactly second nature to Yakut Russians, but moonlighting after work hours is nearly ubiquitous, and since that can be illegal under the socialist system, payment for services is in rubles. Not actual, authentic rubles, because those were made of shitty alloys, but pure gold stolen from the mines or imported from abroad and recast as actual gold coins to fulfill all their illegitimate needs. At least, that's the theory—people will debase the hell out of the things if they can get away with it. If anyone tries to pay you with them, always, *always* scratch those things and run a chem analyzer on them first.

> Mr. Bonds