

My dear Aaron,

I received a few days ago, my long awaited set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Edition, published 1929. It cost me landed £43, having taken advantage of the premium on Gold some time ago existing between South Africa and England.

As this is the very latest edition, the Atlas of the USSR is very much up to-date, since it shows all new towns in existence in 1929. There is also an enormous chain of new Railways being built, the latter under construction almost predominate on the old Railways. There is also an enormous mass of all sorts of information on the country in ~~general~~ general, and as these are, I take it, reliable are very interesting.

However, I have had a good look at the map, and the relative distances as from Lugansk to Moscow and Leningrad on the one hand and the distances from Nijni-Novgorod to Moscow and Leningrad are very very interesting. The distances are given on the scale map in English miles as well as continental kilometers.

The distances are approximately as following:

(a) Lugansk (which is in Ukraine Republic) is 1100 km. or 750 miles to Moscow, or to Leningrad 1700 km. and a 1000 miles to Leningrad.

(b) Nijni-Novgorod ~~km~~ (which is in the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, Russian proper) is 600 km to Moscow or 400 English miles. Distance to Leningrad 1200 km. or 800 miles, Eng.

(c) Distance from Moscow to Leningrad, 700 km or 400 English Miles.

These are, of course approximate distances, as far as one can make out roughly from the map. These are sufficiently interesting, and which go to prove that the distances from, Nijni-Novgorod to Leningrad is but two thirds of what Lugansk Leningrad would be, for the purpose of "evacuation".

Again Nijni-Novgorod is but a short distance off the Trans Siberian Railway Line, and the "Show Window" of "Railway Efficiency" in the Soviets, on the main tourist route. From Lugansk to the Black Sea, though not so very far, I suppose the Railways are not in such an efficient state as the main Siberian line, and as the shortest route and also cheapest one from Russian proper (RSFSR) to London would be via Leningrad, and not via the Black Sea Ports, the reason why Jerry went to Nijni is obvious.

At the expense of prolongation of his Visa for a few months, he is finding the Baltic Sea Icefree. Also on the direct and best Railway Line route, as undoubtedly the further inland you get, the worse it gets. To get out at the expiration of his Visa previously, would have been end of this month (March) which would not have been so favourable for the leaving of the country. This is my reading of it, anyhow. We shall know it in a few weeks time.

*Jerry*