

18 Francis Avenue, Cambridge

May 10, 1957

Dear Miss Bien:

Referring to the inquiry in your letter of the 8th, the circumstances are as follows.

Some time ago, I think in January or February, the librarian of the Wall Street Journal, whose name I do not recall, wrote asking me whether I could verify and identify the statement, attributed to Lenin, that Soviet communism would force capitalist nations to spend themselves into bankruptcy. I replied that I could not and that I believed the statement to be a fabrication, partly because I never encountered it in the course of fairly extensive research in Lenin's writings, partly because no one who cites it ever gives a precise reference as to where, when, under what circumstances Lenin said or wrote it.

Later Mr. H. Y. Ball, in a letter to the New York Herald Tribune, stated he "knew" that Lenin laid down the formula: "We shall force the United States to spend itself into destruction." Again there was no precise reference. On March 8 I sent a letter to The Herald Tribune, which was published a few days later (I am sorry I cannot give the exact date of publication) expressing the view that the statement was a fiction and ending:

"I suspect a large prize could safely be offered to anyone who will produce authenticated evidence that Lenin ever made this statement."

Neither Mr. Ball nor any other correspondent of The Herald Tribune responded to this challenge.

Sincerely yours

SIGNED — *William Henry Chamberlin*