

469 Maple St.
Winnetka, Illinois

March 26, 1945

Mr. Frank R. Fraprie, Editor,
American Photography,
353 Newbury Street,
Boston 15, Mass.

Dear Mr. Fraprie:

Thank you for your reply of March 19.

It was not my desire to question your determination to keep political controversy out of American Photography. I sought only to answer an assertion by Mr. McKay concerning the professional ethics of artists. Personal political and social views are as irrelevant to the dispute as is opinion on the relative eminence of artists whose work is considered. The debate concerns the morality of an artist who uses the tools of his profession for political or sociological purposes. The political persuasiveness of the artist is also no more pertinent than the degree of his persistence. What is to the point is whether he was condemned for his efforts. I tried to show that many writers and painters in the past entered the controversies of their times, whatever their nature, and were not held in disrespect as a result.

You misunderstand me completely if you think that I condone misrepresentation or falsification in the arts. Artists should be judged by the same ethical standards as other people; but it is ridiculous to expect them to present both sides, impartially, of every controversy they enter, in which their art is the medium of expression. That is beyond human capacity.

Yours sincerely,

Eliot F. Porter