Dear Senator Lehman:

For many years I had been receiving periodicals from the American Section of the Soviet Union's cultural agency, VOKS. For many months I have received none. The enclosed letter, which has just reached me, implies that the sending of these publications has continued. That I have not received them I can only attribute to the action of our postal authorities.

That this is in outrageous violation of what are generally held to be basic American rights is a generality that I need not stress. But that in a period of general international misunderstanding American citizens should be denied access to such factual material as is basic to an understanding of "the other side" is indicative of nothing but the grim determination of our authorities to prevent, even at the cost of our own civil liberties, that peaceful co-existence which has become not only desirable but, in the minds of all decent people, necessary for mankind's continued existence.

As to the nature of the periodicals that are denied me, they are as follows:

ISKUSSTVO is a purely cultural magazine devoted largely to painting and the graphic arts. One of the last numbers that I received carried a highly laudatory article on my painting.

SOVIET LITERATURE is a purely literary magazine publishing English translations of the work of contemporary Soviet novelists and short story writers.

SOVIET UNION is a pictorial magazine showing by color photographs much of what is in progress in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union.

NEW TIMES and NEWS are, as you doubtless know, comparable in a way to our own current news digests but concerned chiefly with news of international significance.

Soviet propaganda? Yes, in a way they all are. But what publications of any country are not written from that country's
viewpoint? And it is the viewpoint of others that, in the world today, we Americans must need to understand.

I am an artist and a writer. Am I to be kept in complete ignorance of the art and literature of a large section of the modern world?

I am an American citizen properly concerned with the conduct of my government in both domestic and foreign affairs. Am I not to measure our domestic progress by the progress made in other lands? Am I to judge of the wisdom of our foreign policy on a basis of ignorance of others' points of view?

This is more than a personal complaint. We are told that Russian censorship is strict, and I believe it is. Have we adopted censorship from Russia? If there is any action that you can take in this disgraceful situation I beg you, in the national interest, to take it.

Faithfully yours,

Rockwell Kent

RK/sj

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