

AN OPEN LETTER

(Editor's Note: The following open letter was written by a student at Washington State. As a strong protest against the growing intolerance among the American people, it is fitting that The Evergreen which stands for Justice and an open mind should print it. Readers who have closed their minds to tolerance and clear thinking would do well to stop at this point).

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Governor Chase A. Clark
Boise, Idaho

My dear Governor Clark:

Recent happenings at the University of Idaho impel me to address this letter to you. In the light of these happenings, a more than considerable amount of criticism is being hurled at you and at some of the people of Moscow. Permit me, please, to again present the facts.

We have on our Pacific Coast some thousands of American-born Japanese. Do you note my emphasis? -- American born! They are American citizens in every respect. Because of the exigencies of war, however, our military authorities have ordered a mass evacuation of all Japanese from the coast areas. No one criticizes those authorities, for we know they are acting in the interests of our defense and are well within their constitutional authority.

As you are undoubtedly aware, some hundreds of these American-born Japanese, these Americans, were attending coastal colleges and universities when the evacuation order was given. Naturally some of them expressed a desire to continue their education at some inland school. With this objective in mind, six of these students applied for entrance at the University of Idaho. University officials corresponded with them and expressed a willingness to accept them into their institution. The students arrived in Moscow, got themselves located, and prepared to register at your state university.

Then it happened. You, Mr. Governor, issued a public statement openly forbidding out-of-state American-born Japanese from enrolling in any of the state's institutions of higher learning. The students who were arranging to continue their studies at the University of Idaho were forbidden entrance. To provide a typical Nazi-like finale -- some of the inevitable pool-hall loafers, and perhaps others, began writing threatening letters to these already completely confused Americans. Two of the students, girls, spent 48 hours in the Moscow city jail for their own protection against possible violence. Many of Moscow's good people, who were befriending the students, also received warnings. Finally the students were threateningly notified that they must leave the city. With this display of your warm Americanism and the impetus which it gave to the Americanism of a few city loafers, the students were compelled to leave.

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I am certain, Mr. Governor, that the majority of the people of Moscow and the students of the University do not approve of your actions. I myself am soon slated for the army, but if I thought that I was going to fight to defend any of the actions such as you have committed, I would hang my head in shame.

Can you, as an American, justify your actions, Mr. Governor?

I ask you again -- Can you?

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Carl Ronning
Washington State College

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