



TAIWANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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Ms. Diane Chang
Executive Vice President
Abercrombie & Fitch
6301 Fitch Path
New Albany, OH 43054
(614) 283-6500

April 17, 2002

Dear Ms. Chang,

I am writing to inform you that our community is outraged by the recent graphic tee shirts that your company has been offering. With logos such as “The Wong Brothers Laundry” and “Wok N Bowl”, I am surprised that you are not personally offended.

I'd like to ask that you initiate a review of these products. They are racially insensitive and help to broadcast very negative stereotypes about our Asian Pacific American community. As you already know, Abercrombie & Fitch has been a very popular label for many young people in our community. It would not be ideal for such a mistake in product development to go unchecked.

I know of many people who have patronized your merchandise and I have many friends who were investors in ANF until finding these reminders of a horrible racist time in America.

Please take this note seriously. I write this note with a hope that you will see these products as I do. However, please be aware that our community and the broader Asian Pacific American community will stand at odds with your firm should these products continue to be sold, and the outrage that exists should not be underestimated.

I await some action or response on your part. Thank you for your time.

Robert Liu
President, TACL National Headquarters.

Via Email

Dear Abercrombie,

I wanted to share with you my disgust and horror regarding some of the products featured on your website, specifically the t-shirts referenced below:

<http://www.abercrombie.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/ProductDisplay?prmenbr=52&prrfnbr=13500479>

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<http://www.abercrombie.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/ProductDisplay?prmenbr=52&prrfnbr=13500451>

<http://www.abercrombie.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/ProductDisplay?prmenbr=52&prrfnbr=13500266>

In general, I'm a good-natured person when it comes to my ethnicity, but these t-shirts are absolutely abominable. I realize a lot of companies are pursuing the fashionable avenue of Asian inspired clothing - stores like Guess, Gucci, Gap, Express and Urban Outfitters all make use of Chinese, Japanese or Southeast Asian themes at various levels of cultural tourism. But the fact that you don't care which distinct region these themes comes from tells us that you're not really interested in these cultures aside from the opportunity to fatten your bottom line.

A company like Abercrombie, I'm sure, must possess a talented or witty designer somewhere that can create interesting, fashionably trendy and overpriced gear that doesn't play to cheesy cultural stereotypes. Certainly a company that has been around since 1892 must possess an ounce of creativity.

Why not create a line of clothing based on violent desecration of indigenous cultures, military overthrow of peoples in their native lands and slavery of black people? I'm sure it will sell just as well and supplement A&F's image in the fashion marketplace.

The "Two Wongs can make it white" is by far the most insulting shirt. A large number of Asian Americans shop at your store, online and retail. Yes, many Chinese Americans worked in laundries after the California gold rush, but do you know why? Do you care? Do you realize that the Chinese migrant workers who built the transcontinental railroad were banned from becoming citizens and specifically barred from immigrating to the US until World War I?

These t-shirts reflect a great deal about America's racist past and because A&F isn't giving a history lesson along with these shirts, they're only perpetuating a shameful past without recognizing the shame that was associated with it. It's like having Volkswagen or BMW running ads featuring caricatures of the Jewish holocaust.

It's strange that while A&F receives a lot of business from the Asian American population, there has never been an Asian American model on a shopping bag, in a catalog or in a picture decorating the store. Your company certainly owes a significant amount of its success to us.

I'm sorry to say that I'm now very disappointed in your company. I enjoyed its style and its clothing. You owe your clientele an apology and I hope that you make every sincere effort to right your wrongs.

Extremely disappointed,

Richard Wang
National Vice President