

'Eskimo Power' with Devil and Pitchfork Irk Eskimos

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW and up until this week could be bought in downtown Fairbanks, Alaska, for \$4.49.

FAIRBANKS — Discrimination comes in many colors — gray, navy, dark green, and maroon; small, medium, and large; A shipment of comic sweat-shirts arrived in Fairbanks and were piled in a heap on a

counter in the local Woolworth store.

Among pictures of Archie Bunker, red-white-and-blue VOTE shirts, and one which says "Property of A Dirty Old

Man," was a sweatshirt that said "Eskimo Power" and showed a small devil with horns and pitchfork.

Mary Toyukak of the Eskimo Language Workshop at the

University of Alaska wandered in the store, spotted the shirts, and was somewhat disturbed by them. She purchased one quietly and wore it to work the

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"POWER" FAILURE IN FAIRBANKS — A local store marketed a sweatshirt showing a devil with pitchfork beside the phrase "Eskimo Power". Mary Toyukak of the Eskimo Language Workshop at the University of Alaska models the shirt which offended the city's Eskimo people and was finally removed to be shipped back to the manufacturer.

— Photo by JIMMY BEDFORD

Eskimo Power and Devil

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next day to test reactions of fellow workers at the bi-lingual and very integrated language laboratory.

It did not take long for reactions to set in.

"What does a devil have to do with Eskimo power?" "Why?" and "What is it trying to say?" are a few of the printable comments.

It was generally agreed by the combined native and non-native staff that the shirts were in bad taste.

Irene Reed, head of the Workshop, made a call to the store manager, Robert Hemerick. His response was immediate and commendable. He pulled the shirts off the floor for shipment back to the manufacturer.

The manufacturer is a company called Champion Products, Inc. in Rochester, N.Y., a rather long way from Alaska and its oldest inhabitants, the Eskimo people.

On an earlier shipment, the store manager in Fairbanks said they received similar shirts with "Eskimo Power" and the popu-

lar footprint motif, but in a pigeon-toed pattern. That shipment was also removed from stock by the management.

By this time, someone in Rochester, N.Y., may be beginning to get an idea of what Eskimo power is all about. They may even be receptive to a native-designed symbol that would have relevant cultural meaning and besides which, might sell!

The management of Woolworth's is being lauded locally by Eskimos for their sensitive handling of a touchy problem.

Before Tundra Times could get to the store for a look at the offending shirts, they were already loaded onto a cart and on their way to the dark reaches of the shipping room for return to the east coast.

Eskimos have nothing whatever against sweatshirts in general or Rochester, N.Y., in particular, but will be curiously watching the next shipment to Alaska to see if "Eskimo Power" has to go into action again.