

The newspaper Corriere della Sera has been committed for trial on the “case” of child labour in Turkey

Ponzano, April 12th, 1999. Following the lawsuit brought by the Benetton Group, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Milan has requested that the journalist Riccardo Orizio and the daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* be committed for trial for libel with aggravated circumstances to the detriment of Benetton.

Orizio and the *Corriere della Sera* are charged on the basis of information divulged last October, which has proved to be incorrect. They unjustly charged the Benetton Group of being responsible for exploiting child labour on a large scale in Turkey for the wickedly speculative purpose of producing, at low labour costs, garments for sale in western markets.

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All these declarations are absolutely false. First of all, the data collected on the Turkish children, cited in Orizio's articles, resulted to be extensively incorrect. Secondly, Benetton has neither a direct relationship nor any control over Bermuda, the factory in Istanbul criticised by Orizio. Thirdly, the licensee in Turkey for the Benetton brand produces exclusively for the Turkish domestic market. This means that it is true the exact contrary of what surprisingly Orizio has declared. Indeed, the truth is that by actually producing, in Turkey, products for that country, it does not represent an exploitation of this market, but rather it is increasing its value.

However, what we especially lament is that Orizio, involving so heavily, structurally and unjustly Benetton, he has given international prominence to a newspaper report which would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Nevertheless, the Benetton Group emphasises and reaffirms the extreme gravity of the child labour problem towards which the Group has always demonstrated its concern. The method, the mean and the real objectives of Orizio's initiative, together with all the other aspects of this issue, must be entirely clarified in from of the Judiciary Authority.