

Pharmaceutical Mass Murder - Opioid Crisis in the USA

A comment by Hermann Ploppa.

This week, another pre-trial settlement was reached in the USA. So-called class actions are possible there. This means that if many thousands of Americans have suffered a damage, then they can all file a united lawsuit against the party who caused the damage. This can involve astronomical sums. In the current case, two administrative districts in the US state of Ohio filed suit against three pharmaceutical wholesalers (1). Litigation value: 48 billion dollars. And the question is whether it is at all possible to make up for the damage suffered by innocent US citizens with money alone. The legal pill dealers are partly to blame for the deaths of 400,000 people in the United States of America. The buyers of the drug Oxycontin had become addicted. In addition, Oxycontin had paralyzed breathing and people were miserably suffocated. It is estimated that 95 million people in the USA currently take painkillers regularly, i.e. almost one third of all US citizens. And 2.7 million humans are considered as addicted to the legal pills. Meanwhile grandparents have to take over the raising of their grandchildren because their children are no longer able to bring up their children due to drug addiction (2). Pill addiction overwhelms the emergency services of entire regions, as the weekly newspaper 'Die Zeit', which is actually very popular in the USA, reports:

"In many places emergency doctors can no longer respond quickly enough to the multitude of calls; in Ohio the victims of an overdose have to be stored in refrigerated caravans again and again because the morgues are overcrowded. (3)

Well, in the class action lawsuit negotiations, it was agreed this week to close the case. Instead of the 48 billion dollars, the three pill wholesalers voluntarily pay the injured parties a sum of 260 million dollars. They do this and attach importance to the statement that they will not acknowledge any guilt for the mass murder of their customers. Consequently, no criminal proceedings will be opened against the top managers of these Death Dealers. The pre-trial settlement is a severe defeat for the relatives of the victims. Because a considerable part of the \$260 million that has been won will seep into the pockets of lawyers on both sides. For the legal drug dealers, the amount is comparatively neglectible. Further class actions by a total of 2,700 affected communities in the USA are to follow. It is to be feared that these lawsuits will remain likewise without consequences for the murderers wearing suits.

This is one of the most serious internal crises the USA has ever experienced. The opioid crisis. This time it does not primarily affect the discriminated minorities of the black community or the Hispanic population. In the northeast of the USA more and more people from the white middle class and from the poorer segment of the white population are swallowing the painkiller Oxycontin. It is a preparation in which natural poppy substances are chemically manipulated showing big similarities to heroin. It was invented in Germany. In the 1920s, Merck launched it profitably on the market as Eukodal. Adolf Hitler had it prescribed by his personal doctor Morell in the Second World War, so that the looming defeat did not hurt the Führer so much. In the USA, the Sackler family

discovered the potential and marketed Eukodal. The Sacklers earned a fortune with it. Bought doctors wrote articles in specialist journals in the 1990s. They claimed that the application of the extremely strong painkiller to deathly patients in hospices had shown that only very few terminally ill had become addicted to Oxycontin. One can neglect the addiction potential. This resulted in a mass prescription by family doctors even in cases of minor pain. A large number of patients became addicted and demanded even more Oxycontin.

Clinics, so called "pill centrifuges", prescribed Oxycontin extremely willingly for a surcharge of 100 to 400 dollar per prescription. The alleged pain patients increased now the desired pills on the black market for 100 dollar. To speed up the flash, the end consumers dissolve the dangerous pill in water.

The consumption of Oxycontin became especially in the northeast of the USA an epidemic. The opioid epidemic is spreading particularly in those areas where an industry once flourished that then migrated to China. Former auto metropolises such as Detroit today sometimes look like Germany after bombing raids. The desolation must be numbed. And even where workers are urgently needed, entrepreneurs can no longer find suitable employees. In the USA, applicants have to undergo a blood test to get the job. The system checks whether the potential employees are addicted to drugs. And a quarter of all applicants were found to have opioid residues. They are "too high to work", as die Zeit called it in an article(3). The opioid epidemic ist sticking hard in the USA. The insurance industry estimates the damage caused by legal and illegal drugs at 631 billion dollars between 2015 and 2018. And a study by the Brookings Institution speaks of a "spiral of despair" (4) and an economic loss of 500 billion dollars. This study found that the life expectancy of middle-aged white men has fallen steadily since the outbreak of the opioid epidemic, while it continues to rise in Europe.

A high level of suffering among the population has long been accepted by politicians. It is a tradition in the USA to bribe prominent physicians so that they can write courtesy reports and courtesy articles for a generous fee about extremely unhealthy substances. In the 1920s, public relations entrepreneur Edward Bernays bought medical professors to certify that cigarette consumption was harmless to health (5). It was not until the 1990s that the cigarette industry was heavily punished in class action lawsuits with billions in damage compensation.

But not only scientists can be corrupted. Now, in addition to the catastrophe with the legal opioids, the advance of organized crime is also coming. A similar situation had already occurred in the 1980s with the Iran-Contra affair. At that time, the Congress in Washington was not willing to provide money for the paramilitary terror troops of the Contras, to destabilize the peaceful Nicaragua. The CIA came up with the idea of finding the missing money through drug trafficking. The Contras bought cocaine from Colombian drug cartels, and the CIA took over the marketing of the white powder in the big cities of the USA. The Contras were able to buy weapons from the profit. The cocaine was processed into the extremely dangerous drug crack. Crack was preferentially used in the districts of the African Americans and led to a dramatic collapse of social

cohesion. When journalist Gary Webb meticulously and irrefutably uncovered these connections in the 1990s, he was soon found shot dead in his apartment.

Since the prescription of Oxycontin in the USA has been handled more cautiously, masses of heroin are flooding the country. Heroin portions cost between \$5 and \$10, and the substance is much purer than before. The less Oxycontin appears on the market, the more heroin is taken. Since the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the poppy fields destroyed by the Taliban have flourished again. Since then, the heroin trade has experienced a new upswing. There is a strange symbiosis of military presence and organized crime in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Both places are under the firm control of NATO troops, and organised crime flourishes in their slipstream.

Drug addiction has such dramatic consequences that in 2014 the Governor of Vermont, Pete Shumlin, dedicated his State of the Union speech exclusively to the heroin epidemic (6). He said, "Heroin and opiate addictions threaten us in every corner of our state ... What began as a problem with Oxycontin and other prescription drugs in Vermont has evolved into a full-blown heroin crisis." In 2017, new US President Donald Trump declared a national emergency due to the addiction epidemic in his country. However, relatively little has happened. As a result, the Washington Congress has loosened 6 billion dollars to fight the epidemic. We do not know where the money has gone. At any rate, the situation has gotten worse since then. Because the constantly growing demand for painkillers can no longer be satisfied even with new record performances in heroin production. This is why the dealers are now throwing the fully synthetic opioid fentanyl onto the market on a massive scale. Recently, investigators discovered 30 kilograms of fentanyl. Reason enough for the Hamburg news magazine Der Spiegel to indirectly suspect the People's Republic of China of the new death drug as a major dealer (7).

And Germany, too, is not immune to the dangers of a "health industry" that has become more corrupt at a rapid pace. The magazine Spektrum (8) points out that offshoots of the US pharmaceutical companies are already conquering the German market and is particularly targeting the Mundipharma group. The group finances "influential campaigns, such as 'Schmerzfreie Stadt Münster' or 'Schmerzfrees Krankenhaus' - with the aim of training doctors or certifying clinics. In 2017, US Congressmen wrote an urgent letter to the then WHO Director-General Margaret Chan. They warned of a globalization of the opioid crisis: 'Mundipharma today uses many of the same deceptive and ruthless practices to sell oxycontin abroad,' the letter says.

Such efforts are no longer entirely new. The use of the drug Ritalin in small children is controversial. However, the privatisation and deregulation of the health care system in Germany has not yet progressed to such an extent that such excesses as with opioids in the USA are possible in our country. However, the public should not practice tolerance as soon as even the slightest signs of such a development as in the USA appear.

Sources:

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