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Statement of Andreas Meyer at the public hearing of the Panel of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth on February 1st 2013

Thank you very much Mr Chairman, thank you very much Prof. Dr. Kruse.

Finally we have a survey that shows the issues of the Contergan victims, independent of any influence by the Grünenthal Company. There had been several attempts at surveys. Not all of them were independent of other influences.

50 years ago, Grünenthal took away our limbs through use of the drug Contergan (thalidomide). 10 years later German politicians took away our right to sue Grünenthal for compensation through the means of the Contergan Foundation Act. This means that it was not the offender who was dispossessed but we, the victims!

And the politicians of this country still celebrate this perfidious act of constitutional perversion as a great example of social policy.

Yes, there is a lot to celebrate:

All the companies of the Grünenthal owner are flourishing today. The Contergan victims suffer deprivation of the worst kind. And it is exactly this worst kind of deprivation and its effects that are shown in the survey by the University of Heidelberg. These are just the results of the crime done by this country to the Contergan victims through dispossession and through the deprivation that is caused by this dispossession.

Today, millions are paid to the victims in Australia because they are able to sue the companies responsible. This is no longer possible in Germany.

But the following has been possible:

- for 30 years a lawyer represented Grünenthal in the Contergan Foundation,
- for 30 years Grünenthal was able to see our medical files in the Contergan Foundation,
- for 30 years Grünenthal paid for the experts of the Medical Commission of the Contergan Foundation. And even now Mrs Blumenthal, the Chairwoman of the Board, who is present today favours a contract with the Grünenthal Company to pay for the expenses of the Medical Commission. It is to the benefit of the Federal Government if Grünenthal pays for the expenses because it is the

government's duty to pay for the Medical Commission.

When I inspected the Board minutes I was not allowed to make notes or copies. Every action of the victims to control the Board members is voided. Our task is completely undermined.

To help you better understand why that is the case please let me quote from the Board minutes which I received for inspection shortly before my heart attack last year:

"December 8th 2010 - Ms F." (that is a lady from the Grünenthal Company)
"announced that payment for these expenses might be taken over by the Grünenthal Company. To avoid probable accusations of corruption the Grünenthal Company suggests paying the expenses to the Foundation instead of paying the money directly to Dr. Graf."

I repeat once more:

To counteract accusations of corruption Grünenthal paid these expenses to the Contergan Foundation and not to Dr. Graf.

This obviously means that the Contergan Foundation let itself be used to "launder" money.

And that happened while the Chairman of the Board, Mr Dieter Hackler – he is sitting there in the front – his deputy, Ms Brigitte Lampersbach, and the person responsible for judicial supervision, that is Dr. Kürschner, I have seen her somewhere today, and representatives of your ministry, Dr Schroeder, were watching benevolently.

I would like to open up the question of mutual obligation a bit more.

I forgot one thing:

The wonderful internet portal which Mrs Blumenthal just presented to us is planned to be paid by Grünenthal too.

It seems that Grünenthal is not satisfied with seeing our files for 30 years. Now they would like to inspect what we want to reveal via the internet portal. It will be used by Grünenthal to eavesdrop. For more than 30 or 40 years, this procedure of the Contergan Foundation has been solely in favour of Grünenthal and the Wirtz family.

And I can tell you that the Wirtz family has paid dearly for that. Michael Wirtz, for example, donated 250,000 deutschmarks during the campaign of ex-chancellor Helmut Kohl to collect donations for his political party. In 2008,

Chancellor Angela Merkel was awarded the Charlemagne Prize, and a member of the governing body of the Charlemagne Prize is the owner of Grünenthal, Michael Wirtz. I believe this shows very clearly what a small world it is regarding the topic of Contergan. The victims have no reason to believe in politics.

The politicians have made a survey that is more unwelcome than some of the speeches made here as it will cost money. And it is the taxpayer's money and not the Wirtz family's money.

What is happening here is once again the same as we have lived with for 40 years:

We are debased to become petitioners again; once again we are obliged to receive compensation paid by the taxpayer.

We are not petitioners, we are Grünenthal victims.

And here is what we want:

The draft by the Parliamentary Group of the Left Party (DIE LINKE) shows the right way. For example it puts forward the idea that Grünenthal or the Wirtz family should be obliged to pay too.

And one can make it even easier:

Just make a law that covers all of the expenses of the Contergan scandal but refund yourself through the money of the Wirtz family, even if it takes a hundred years.

I am finished now. Just one last sentence: claim a refund from the owners.

Thank you.

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