

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

A Case of Organized “Hysteria”: Claudia von Werlhof and the Viennese Thought Police

Claudia von Werlhof

In this brief report, the Austrian ecofeminist political scientist and economist Claudia von Werlhof describes having to endure a storm of criticism for stepping out of line in stating certain roots of our present extreme crisis.

Since the middle of February 2010, there has been a constant sort of witch hunt against me online and in the Austrian press. It started with an interview for the well-known newspaper *Der Standard* in Vienna, in which I was chosen to join several more-or-less prominent people for a discussion on the economic crisis. It appeared on February 14, 2010 under the title: “Capitalism, a project of destruction.” I explained our approach of a “Critical Theory of Patriarchy” in a few sentences. In the end I pointed to the international debate about Haiti and the rumors that the earthquake in January 2010 might have been produced artificially.

An excerpt from that interview:

Standard: Where are the alternatives to the global market?

Werlhof: They lie in subsistence production. Only subsistence production can substitute for capitalist commodity production. The movement of the Zapatistas in Mexico, for instance, does not want to cooperate with the State, but tries to build the economy from below.

Standard: Could this function in a centralized Europe as well?

Werlhof: In Europe you have to look at history, first of all. In the time of the peasant wars, for instance, people tried to find an alternative to dispossession. But this was impeded by violence, forcing people finally into workhouses and factories. Besides looking at history, we have to recognize our relationship with nature, as we no longer know very much about nature’s cycles and rhythms. We have to start with studying pre-modern views in order to help a new ethics to emerge, so that what has happened in Haiti cannot happen any more.

Standard: The earthquake?

Werlhof: Yes, it could have been an artificially produced one.

Standard: How is that?

Werlhof: Within the HAARP project,¹ a military research center in Alaska, machines have been produced that are able to create artificial earthquakes. They are used in the search for oil reserves. It is thought that there are oil reserves located between Haiti and Cuba. The earthquake in Haiti could have been created mechanically in order to allow the U.S. occupation of the country.

¹ The U.S. military’s High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program.

Standard: Do you really believe this? It sounds like a conspiracy theory.

Werlhof: I do not believe anything, but it is a fact that the technology for artificial earthquakes exists. On the other hand, publicly there is no discussion of such things at all.

Standard: A blind spot?

Werlhof: Yes, and not only in this case. Few are seeing the economic crisis as a very good reason to finally change things.

After the interview was published, I was accused of saying things that are unscientific and that cannot possibly be true. These accusations were made publicly by the director of the Institute of Political Science where I have been working for 21 years. He said that I damaged the Institute by pointing to the international debate about the possibility that the earthquake in Haiti was artificially produced.

In the rather polemical “scienceblogs.de” in which he published his statement, some 900 comments were published within a few days. All were negative and extremely aggressive, calling me a “crude conspiracy theorist,” mocking me as a woman, as a social scientist, and as a teacher. The extreme right party in Vienna (BZÖ) even formally accused me, in front of the public prosecutor in Innsbruck, of being mentally ill and demanded I be removed from my position at the University.

But who knows who really wrote the blog comments? When my students started to post their comments on the blog, they were removed almost immediately. Other people sent me positive comments that they tried to post but were never published.

Some of the comments also argued that I was doing away with feminism, women’s studies, and ecofeminism by proving that they are really completely useless, crazy, and unscientific ways of thinking, because I had supposedly ventured into fields outside of my discipline. Some of the natural scientists who commented claimed that artificial earthquakes are not possible, and since I am not a natural scientist or geophysicist, I did not have any idea what I was talking about. Yet it seems it is they who are misinformed about HAARP (along with similar installations in Russia [Nishni Nowgorod], Northern Europe [Tromsø in Norway] and Puerto Rico), which are conducting the experiments in question.

I answered the attacks with an “Open Letter” to the director of the Institute of Political Science asking him how I could have damaged the institute by engaging in my right to speak freely. The response was silence.

In the meantime, I have received a lot of information from all over the world about these experiments, and especially from biometrician and environmental epidemiologist, Dr. Rosalie Bertell, who in 1986 was awarded the Right Livelihood

Award for her work. Her 2000 book, *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War*,² is a critical study of the military's impact on the environment and details a wide range of military experiments and programs, including HAARP. In *Planet Earth* she states that part of the new techniques of non-nuclear planetary mass destruction under development by the military include the ability to artificially induce earthquakes, a dangerous manipulation of the planet itself.

Among many topics covered in the book, Bertell draws a connection between experiments with the manipulation of the ionosphere and the technology of deep-earth tomography, which involves pulsing extremely low frequency waves for the purposes of "mapping" underground structures such as oil and gas deposits. She notes that

...the wider effects of deep-earth tomography are unknown. Certainly, it has the capability to cause disturbance of volcanoes and tectonic plates, which in turn have an effect on the weather. Earthquakes, for example, are known to interact with the ionosphere. ... On 28 July 1976 the Tangshen earthquake in China, which left 650,000 people dead, was preceded by an airglow said to have been caused by the Soviet ionospheric heater. On 23 September 1977 the *Washington Post* reported a strange star-like ball of light sighted over Petrozavodsk. A similar airglow effect was reported over the American Midwest on 23 September 1993, at a time of disastrous flooding. At the same time, a lightning flash, rising from the tops of the clouds up into the atmosphere, was reported. This was recognized as a new geophysical phenomenon—normal lightning flows between two clouds, or from clouds to Earth.

On 12 September 1989, magnetometers at Corralitos (near Monterey Bay, California) detected unusual ultra-low frequency waves between 0.01 Hertz and 10 Hertz. This is the lowest range of ELF waves. These waves grew to about 30 times their first intensity, and finally subsided on 5 October 1989. On 17 October they suddenly appeared again at 2:00 pm local time, with signals so strong that they went off the scale. Three hours later the San Francisco earthquake took place. On 29 March 1992, the *Washington Times* reported that "satellites and ground sensors detected mysterious radio waves or related electrical and magnetic activity before major earthquakes in Southern California during 1986-7, Armenia in 1988, and Japan and Northern California in 1989." The 17 January 1994 earthquake in Los Angeles was also preceded by unusual radio waves and two sonic booms. These strange "coincidences" have never been completely explained.

Some recent earthquakes have been significantly different from the so-called "typical" earthquake. Normally, earthquakes occur at about 20 to 25 km below sea level. However, the devastating earthquake in Bolivia on 8 June 1994 took place 600 km below the surface.³

Bertell's book details a whole array of military technologies related to weather systems that are not only potentially devastating in their effect, but also almost completely unknown by the general public.

I contacted Rosalie Bertell asking for advice, because at the beginning of March 2010, a new wave of "information" about me and what I had presumably said started circulating. From one day to the next, all the newspapers in Austria said the same thing, namely that I was definitely accusing the U.S. government and military for having actually

² The original publisher, The Women's Press, went out of business shortly after this book was published in 2000, and it remains a relatively little-known but unique and highly important study. Black Rose reprinted it in 2001.

³ Rosalie Bertell, *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War* (New York: Black Rose Books, 2001), pp. 131-132, see original for more details and references).

produced the earthquake in Haiti! This was an outright and consciously produced lie. Even the newspaper *Der Standard*, in which my interview had originally appeared, repeated the lie without considering that the very interview they themselves had printed contained no such statement. I informed the different media about the fact that this was misinformation. They simply continued to spread the lie. This lasted for about two weeks and produced a startling 20,000 comments on the Internet!

A huge wave of hysterical comments about me were produced and repeated. Even a wild idea about an “ecofeminist theory about earthquakes” was invented, and I was said to have accused “the men of destroying the world.”

I turned to the president of the University of Innsbruck for help, as he is supposed to act to protect me publicly. I also turned to the chief editor of *Der Standard*, a woman who had been lying to and about me. I got no answer at all. I got no support.

Soon I discovered that in February, an article on HAARP technologies was published in the Austrian military newspaper, *Der Soldat*, at the very time my interview was published and caused such an uproar. Here was a very official source detailing the capacities of the HAARP program; and in the meantime, I was being called a lunatic and conspiracy theorist for even mentioning the existence of such capacities!

As to the matter of “conspiracy theories,” it is a sad commentary on the integrity of our intellectual classes that raising questions about the secretive, anti-democratic, and ecologically destructive activities of the modern militarized state would be dismissed with such a crude allegation. This is all the more so when the behavior of the United States—with its multi-billion dollar “black-box” military and spy apparatus stemming back to the building of the atomic bomb—is regarded as *a priori* above reproach.

Finally, a group of PhD students at the Institute published a letter supporting me and our new theoretical approach, the “Critical Theory of Patriarchy.” There were also international campaigns of solidarity from Mexico, Germany, and the United States, which produced Letters of Support signed by many intellectuals from around the world. In addition, many individual letters of support came streaming in to support me.

These efforts had the effect of persuading the Rector of the University of Innsbruck to write a letter, dated April 14, 2010, defending my academic freedom and freedom of speech and calling for a serious debate on my theoretical approach and on the rumors about Haiti.⁴

I had to think long and hard to understand what was going on and why. My impression was at first that there were specific people with specific interests, in this country and overseas, trying to damage my credibility so that nobody will listen to me any more. But given the depth of misinformation that has gone into the attack on me, I have come to the conclusion that—paradoxically—it is, in fact, not me who is important in this case. What is

⁴ Since that time, I have continued my work, which has included the founding of a “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth” with the enthusiastic support of more than 600 participants at the “International Goddess Congress on Politics and Spirituality” at Hambach-Castle in Germany on May 29, 2010.

important is that they are trying to hide what really is at stake: The attacks on and manipulation of Mother Earth herself, as her natural order is bent to the purpose of wars, catastrophes, and the politics of terror to come!