

## Professor Marc Becker

Truman State University

- Associate professor of Latin American history at Truman State University
- Organizer and media developer for "Historians against the War"
- Protests the celebration of Columbus Day

**An associate professor** of Latin American history at Truman State University, Marc Becker is an organizer and media developer for Historians against the War, which defines itself as an anti-war group of "radical scholars and intellectuals... deeply concerned about growing repression [in the United States] and, in particular, its impact on critical thought and expression." In a joint effort with the radical Center for Constitutional Rights, Historians Against the War strives to expose "U.S. war crimes and government deception," including "the destruction of antiquities allowed by the U.S. forces in Iraq."<sup>112</sup> Historians Against the War has developed a nationwide "virtual speakers bureau" of members prepared to disseminate the group's anti-American message to the crowds attending anti-war demonstrations anywhere in the country—all in an effort to derail what it calls "the current empire-building and war-making activities of the United States government at home and abroad."<sup>113</sup>

Professor Becker has a long history of radicalism and antipathy toward the United States. At age 18, he refused to register for the draft and fled to Canada to avoid prosecution. As part of his classroom lectures, he recounts to students stories of his participation in protests against free trade talks in Latin America, including his numerous trips to condemn "Western intrusion" in Ecuador, one of Latin America's most stable democracies. Of his experience at one such protest in 2002, where his fellow

demonstrators got out of control and were tear-gassed by Ecuadorian police, Professor Becker has said, "For me, the impact of having been tear-gassed was such that I lost my fear. They can do this, but they can't kill us, and we come back even stronger."

Professor Becker condemns American capitalism and "militarism." He has protested the celebration of Columbus Day, because "Columbus's actions launched an era of modern colonialism, rape, pillage, genocide, cultural destruction, slavery, economic and environmental devastation." "Christopher Columbus," Professor Becker elaborates, "is a classic grade school hero—and one that is built on a very tall pile of lies. We are told that he proved that the world was round, even though people had known this for millennia and the only astounding thing about Columbus's ideas was how completely wrong he was (the earth was much larger than he thought). We are told that Columbus discovered America, but yet with people living in this hemisphere for tens of thousands of years he discovered it only in the sense that a robber might be said to 'discover' cash in a bank vault."<sup>114</sup>

Professor Becker views the contemporary issues of free trade and globalization through the same ideological prism: In 2003, he said, "Five hundred and eleven years after [Columbus] sailed the ocean blue, globalization in the form of the FTAA, the WTO, and the IMF continues to devastate the Indigenous peoples of the Americas."<sup>115</sup>

*See also:* Professors Ensalaco, Williams  
*Research:* John Perazzo