

# Communist Party of Spain (reconstructed)

## Contemplative criticism

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[The article was in responses to a criticism of the armed struggle "[The False Path of the W. European 'Urban Guerrilla'](#)" by P. Becker in the review "A World to Win" #4 1985 published by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement]

The controversy started within revolutionary circles in Western Europe, about the most important experiences of the class struggle in recent years, goes far beyond this framework to turn into a much more general debate.

An increasing number of workers, students and other democrats are interested in, and even actively participate in, open discussion.

There are different reasons for this growing interest, but the main one - the one that must be remembered - is none other than the persistence and enlargement acquired by the evil called terrorist phenomenon, that is to say, the incapacity of the imperialist states to annihilate the popular resistance movement which is rising everywhere against the measures of exploitation and oppression, and this despite the arsenal of laws and special bodies with which they are endowed.

It is in this general climate and in the midst of expectations that it creates, that the wide-ranging debate which we have just spoken of takes place.

Naturally, among the quantity of proposals, self-criticism and more or less severe criticism, old and new ideas, sincere intentions of recovery, etc. Also appears from time to time, like a foreign voice, the criticism of a few idle and infatuated intellectuals - real pedants - who have done and



will never do anything other than criticize, at the same time as they claim the right to teach others what they should and should not do.

One of these squeaky voices, that of a certain P. Becker, descended into the arena with an article entitled "The wrong way of urban guerrilla warfare in Western Europe", which appeared in the fourth issue of the review "A world to gain", the organ of the self-proclaimed "Internationalist Revolutionary Movement".

It would be long and boring to approach here the abundant biased interpretations, the omissions, and all the commonplaces of the repertoire of the most reactionary bourgeois press that this text contains.

This is why we will stop only on questions of great topicality, only on those which, in our opinion, are of great interest.

P. Becker begins his article by admitting his intention to conduct a "decisive criticism", destructive, and this from an alleged "scientific" position Marxist-Leninist, what he does not hesitate to describe as "continual revisionist and reformist deviations" in the revolutionary movement of the countries of Western Europe.

Let's see how it goes:

"Last year in Western Europe a series of acts of sabotage and assassination were carried out, the explosion of bombs against NATO objectives and against companies having relations with South Africa, until these more dramatic episodes: the elimination of a French general and a West German arms manufacturer during the winter of 1985".

Such are the "revisionist and reformist deviations" (the "dramatic" episodes, the "sabotage and assassinations") which provoke the most uncontrolled reactions of Mr. Becker.

One could certainly assume, if only for a moment, that this is only a slip, one of those bad tricks that "the demons of the unconscious" often play to individuals of its kind; however, the passage we have just quoted reflects the most complete expression of its true class position.

This same position manifests itself, throughout its long article, in many other ways. But let's continue his talk:

"In some countries - Becker insists later, quoting a statement from the MRI - a small number of individuals have passed on to terrorism, a political and ideological line which does not rely on the "revolutionary masses" and which has not a correct perspective on the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism.

While they like to appear to be very "revolutionary", these terrorist movements have in most cases integrated a whole series of revisionist and reformist deviations, such as "the liberation struggle" in the imperialist countries, the defense of Imperialist USSR, and so on.

These movements share with economism the fundamental inability to understand the centrality of the task of raising the political consciousness of the masses and of guiding them to political struggle as preparation for the revolution. "

This is the synthesis of Becker's criticism of "terrorism", as well as the conception on which it is based, and its political program. But there is more, he says:

"In imperialist countries revolutionary situations are not usual: they occur very rarely".

In such conditions of peace, political stability and general progress, Becker questions:

"How can a strategy of war of attrition mobilize the masses for the revolutionary war? "

As can easily be seen, the answer lies in the question itself, and for this reason we believe that any further comments on this subject would be superfluous.

What is important to emphasize is that this idyllic vision of current bourgeois society - a vision which, we will have the opportunity to verify, will immediately change into a catastrophic vision - does not prevent Becker from recognizing that, in imperialist countries, "inevitably will emerge from revolutionary situations. "

The very functioning of the system, pontificates Becker, "including the dynamics which lead it towards a world inter-imperialist war (...) will precipitate thousands of individuals on the scene of history. "

It is at this time that the conditions for the insurrection will be created, and that the long-awaited hour will have struck to make "a jump at the fateful moment".

To write what we have just presented, Becker had to leave aside something as flagrant and essential as the general crisis in which the capitalist world is currently struggling; he had to sidestep the warmongering preparations that the imperialists are developing, as well as the rising waves of revolutionary struggle that are observed all over the world.

Becker maintains that in capitalist countries there is no revolutionary situation, to recognize immediately after that these conditions "will inevitably emerge". It is clear that in any case it makes these conditions depend on the outbreak - and we also assume the development - of a third world war.

All of Becker's ideas revolve around this design. Does this fall under Marxism? Becker claims so. Mao writes:

"Either the revolution prevents war, or the war will break out the revolution. "

And Becker, for his part, ruled out any possibility of revolution before war broke out, and he left us naked and helpless in the face of the blind forces unleashed by capitalism.

One could object to the conclusion that we have just expressed, that Mao was referring to the revolution in backward countries or in the Third World; however, it is unclear how the latter could avoid war without the alliance and support of "second world" countries, as the current Chinese leaders maintain. As we can appreciate, this archi-revisionist thesis contains at least a certain logic.

The conception of the world that we designate as "catastrophist" (a single and indivisible world, inevitably heading towards the abyss of its self-destruction), constitutes the ideological basis of Becker's political positions.

According to this conception, there is at present in the world only one economic-social system (the imperialist system), and this one moves, pushed by the force of inertia of its internal contradictions, towards a new general conflagration.

According to this same conception, the masses of the various countries have no role to play here: the "millions of individuals" to which Becker alludes having not yet been pushed "onto the stage of history" by the historical trend (by the crisis, imperialism and the convulsions it provokes). It seems that the two world wars and the revolutions they engendered were child's play.

Furthermore, still according to Becker, the general crisis of the system that these two wars engendered does not even deserve to be taken into consideration; and as for the next war which the most aggressive imperialist circles prepare, it does not translate any more a situation of acute crisis of the system and, in any case, the "revolutionary" masses will have to wait, quietly seated, until the explosion of the bombs pushes them to "the stage".

And so, according to Becker, when these fall on the poor heads of these, the supreme moment (the hour of insurrection) will sound; but meanwhile the workers of all countries, and in particular those of Western Europe - since this is what it is all about - can do nothing to prevent this war, nor by promoting revolution everywhere, nor by opposing the revolutionary war to the imperialist war.

In reality, what Becker and those of his kind pursue is nothing more than to tie the hands of the workers and ensure the rearguard of imperialism, because if this objective were not achieved, the USSR and the other socialist and progressive countries would be in better conditions to face the aggression.

In "theory" the position defended by Becker calls for the fight against the two superpowers and to keep equidistant from them in order to be able to make the revolution, but, even supposing that this way of thinking contains a sincere revolutionary design, the force of events often pushes towards one of the two parties, precisely on the side of the capitalists, and this, not only against the "imperialist" USSR, but also against all revolutionary countries and movements.

It is not surprising at all to see Mr. Becker crown his article with a furious attack on urban guerrilla warfare in Western Europe, calling it "Gorbachev's shock troops".

What could be said about him and those who like him continually bring water to the mill of Yankee imperialism?

### The theology of the insurrection

His contempt for organized armed struggle and Becker's apology for spontaneous outbursts of the mass struggle (which he himself considers "authentically revolutionary") alerts us - from the start of his article - to his real political ideas :

"A day of revolt in Birmingham inflicts on the imperialists a hundred times more material damage than years of their urban guerrilla warfare - but the most important damage is undoubtedly the fact of having dealt political and ideological blows to the bourgeoisie and its pretensions to a just and satisfying society - alongside which the actions of terrorists are pale. "

Our hero stands at a prudent distance from the battlefield and a promontory, he harangues the organized revolutionaries and the revolted masses; he declares to them: Give up your engagement, lay down your arms! Are you ignorant of the fact that "the most serious damage" that can be caused to the bourgeoisie is to inflict "political and ideological blows" on it?

On the one hand, spontaneous struggles, and on the other political and ideological "blows", such is the platform of economism that Becker wants to smuggle as the latest cry of revolutionary Marxism.

Certainly, all these trifles make us pale.

What leaves us really astonished and perplexed is this constant concern which seems to make Mr. Becker lose sleep, and which leads him to criticize in the most surly and demagogic way a political line which, according to him, "replaces the revolutionary struggle of the masses by armed attacks by a small group".

Now, in the light of what we have just read, in the light of the conception of the "revolutionary struggle" of the masses exposed by Becker, are we not entitled to affirm that what really preoccupies him is exactly the opposite of what he claims?

That is to say that the armed struggle of the urban guerrillas, led by a real communist detachment, not only does not "replace" (how could it do it?) The struggle of the masses but, on the contrary - as we support it - that it stimulates it, that it contributes to its better organization, that it paves the way for it and that it allows it to have a clear program and objectives.

For our part, there is no doubt about this, but if we had it, if we lacked conviction, the mere appearance of Becker's criticism of "terrorism" would be enough to convince us definitively.

The opportunists are afraid of being exposed by the development of the class struggle.

This is why their most salient work consists in attacking those who raise arms with the hand to fight imperialism, by continually pretending that these carry out their actions "on the fringes" of the struggle of masses, that they "replace" it, that they "delay" or "disarticulate" their movement, etc.

The opportunists say this while, on the other hand, they preach submission and superstitious respect for the legality imposed by the guns of the bourgeoisie, they preach pacifism and reformism; and when, despite this work of betrayal, workers and other workers engage in frank and resolute combat, then, in order to avoid being completely exposed, they delve into the classics to "argue" over "the inappropriateness of the moment", on "the unfavourable balance of power", or "the lack of preparation for the armed struggle", and other things of the same ilk; when they do not hide behind the most backward sectors in order to isolate and force those who walk forward to retreat, those who are really ready to fight and to set an example for others.

What can we learn from experience in our country?

For years, the carrillists and other ruffians focused their activity on the liquidation of the revolutionary workers movement, based on the supreme argument that "the conditions for the crisis of the system were not met" and, at the same time that they called the workers to "conquer" the fascist union and that they met in round tables with the "evolutionary" sectors of the oligarchy, they were engaged in the persecution of the communists, (of all those who opposed and denounced their anti-worker merry-go-rounds), accusing us of "impatience", of wanting to do politics "with just a machine gun", "revanchism", "provocation", etc.

So that when the economic and political crisis of the regime was unleashed - and the latter launched its reform plans - we were not at all surprised to see the emergence of these same individuals proclaiming the urgent need to "get the country out of the crisis "in order to save" democracy "and the crumbs of the great feast that the financial bourgeoisie had dropped from the table to keep them happy.

Well, we now discover in Becker's article - and without being able to retain a pout of contempt - the same demagogic catchphrase with which the whole pack of "the left" ("communists", "Marxists-Leninists", and even "Maoists Has broken our ears in recent years.

Because it is the same speech, even if it differs in some details.

What is new about Becker - and that's what caught our attention - is the animosity and determination that seizes him in his delirium of persecution.

Let's listen to it again:

"The eyes of those who are impatient, waiting for the day when they can settle their accounts with the bourgeoisie, must rise a little higher, beyond the pure and simple thirst for revenge, until on the horizon where the prospect of armed struggle is taking shape to advance the human race until an entirely new era in the history of the species. "

And Becker completes this blissful position with a desolate call to replace the criticism of weapons brought against putrid bourgeois society by the "weapon" of criticism, or, as he specifies, "by the weapon of the science of revolution"

Bigots, too, have always wanted to present theology as a "science".

The fact that Becker calls his theology "science of revolution" in this case does not change the foundations of the case.

In both cases, the practice does not intervene. All the difference lies in this: Marxism is a doctrine for action, while Becker's worn "Marxism" is nothing other - imagining the best - than an inoperative and contemplative doctrinarism.

It is, moreover, from this contemplative position - very satisfied with herself - that Becker invites us to "raise our gaze" (over the things of the world), "a little higher", in order to "do advance mankind "and pull it out of the darkness that surrounds it.

No question of "settling of scores"! He preaches: Leave aside the "pure and simple thirst for revenge"! Look "towards the horizon where the perspective is taking shape" !!

A false dilemma: the violence of a few or the violence of many

In fact, violence is not the central issue in Becker's criticism of urban guerrilla warfare. His attempt is to pose the false dilemma of whether it is the masses or a "small group" who should exercise it.

But, as far as we know, no one here has said that the revolution can be the business of a few elected officials, so heroic, ardent or willing to sacrifice that they show themselves.

What we support is the absolute necessity of incorporating the armed struggle into the revolutionary strategy, conceiving it as an essential part, as something that stems from all historical development and from the objective material conditions in which today is engaged. Today the class struggle within the imperialist states, of their fascist and spoliatory nature, deeply reactionary.

Under these conditions, which Mr. Becker is careful not to mention, the armed struggle inevitably arises because of the crisis, the increased exploitation of the working class and other workers, the brutality and oppression suffered by the share of the State; it arises from the resistance which the masses consciously oppose to the system of the bourgeoisie in the process of ruin and disintegration.

When the time comes - it is impossible to fix now - this form of struggle will have to become main, and all the others will have to be subordinated to it.

Does this conception exclude party work, ideological and political struggle, organizational work, etc.?

We maintain that this conception not only does not exclude all this, but, on the contrary, that it presupposes and strengthens it; it makes it necessary in the most obvious way.

We do not deny that there are "small groups" which persist in refusing the necessity of the proletarian party, armed with the Marxist-Leninist theory, groups whose armed activity, in most cases, only returns 'to harm them.

But this is another issue that has little or nothing to do with what we are dealing with here.

What we maintain, once again, is that propaganda and "criticism", political struggle and ideological struggle as they were conceived in the previous phase of the development of the capitalist system, are no longer sufficient in themselves to elevate the masses to the comprehension of their historical objectives, and even less to lead them to the fight for power.

Our ideas on this subject are well known, because we have analysed this problem many times and, by that, the many false interpretations made by Mr. Becker in his article will be of no use to him.

For example: When would we have denied that the revolutionary war is a class war? However, we do not limit ourselves to repeating a truth as simple as parrots.

Our attention is focused on finding the paths that will allow the masses to approach their goal, by abandoning the sidings and the beaten tracks (which, as already perfectly demonstrated, do not lead anywhere).

Is this not precisely the mission of any genuinely communist party? According to the "Chinese Bolsheviks" and the Comintern who supported them, the line defended by Mao for the Chinese revolution was "nothing Marxist-Leninist"; they denounced it as "nationalist", "opportunist", "petty bourgeois" and barely "scientific".

The same can be said of the attacks launched by Kautsky and others against Lenin and the October Revolution, because the latter broke with the worm-eaten orthodoxy that Kautsky and others had incubated during decades of "peaceful" development of capitalism.

In both cases, in the same way that Becker now goes about seeking the support of Lenin and Mao, it was a question of preserving at all costs, that is to say at the expense of the real movement, a Doctrinal "purity" which brought very good results for imperialism.

Because, as Lenin reminded us in front of the doctrinaires of this species: "the theory is always gray and the tree of life always green".

Our Party, the PCE (r), does not renounce the heritage bequeathed by the two great revolutions, but what we reject is the scholastic schema which betrays the revolution each time it promises it, relegating it in the Greek calendars, using the same subterfuges as those now used by Becker.

If it is not possible to separate the objective (liberation of the masses) from the way in which we fight, why then should we not apply this same principle to the methods of struggle for the revolution?

If what is at stake here is to prepare the general conditions (and not only those of an ideological type) for the insurrection of the masses, why not start now to prepare them in all areas?

Should we trust once again (that is to say, after all our experiences), the insurrectional promises that will have to be fulfilled at the last moment?

Is it possible to improvise an action of this nature?

By this "way", incorrectly called "October", one will never reach the insurrection, and if it nevertheless ended up occurring from a spontaneous reaction of the workers, it is certain that 'she would fail.

Where, then, are our narrowness of view, the thirst for revenge, the moral exhortation, the "white man's burden" dear to R. Kipling, and the other kindnesses that Mr. Becker lavishes on us?

Who is the Marxist who would dare to assert that the integration of the masses into the political struggle, and into the armed struggle for power as the highest expression, occurred sometimes suddenly, or in the first phase of a revolutionary process?

When Mao maintains that a single spark can ignite the prairie, does he not refer to the integration of the masses into the combat that a small army has waged for a long time?



And was it not the masses who had been fighting until then?

It would moreover be necessary to pierce the ambiguity and the relativity of the very concept of masses in order to finish clarifying this affair. Because even in the experience of the October 1917 insurrection, which Mr. Becker takes as a model, we cannot speak, as we generally do, of a single or automatic act.

It is a complete deception to present history in this way, thus distorting the experience of the October Revolution to oppose it - in the most opportunistic way - to the most advanced forms of the class struggle which is currently taking place in the imperialist countries, invoking the absence of revolutionary conditions in these same countries.

How to explain the phenomenon of armed struggle? By the rantings and the thirst for revenge of some individuals? Becker wants us to take him seriously and to consider his "Marxism-Leninism-Mao thought" as "scientific", but we are not chicks born from the last rain, and we have been for a long time have lugs.

If things were as this man asserts, it is certain that neither he nor all of the bourgeois bourgeois propaganda would devote so much space to him, and would not show such anxiety in combating "terrorism".

It would be impossible to understand the October insurrection without the democratic-bourgeois revolution of February which dethroned the Czar, and these two revolutions without taking into account that of 1905. In addition, the imperialist war had dislocated an already corrupt Russian state and abused.

The masses, most of them framed in the army and the navy, were armed and resolved to fight to the end. Under these conditions, it was not very difficult to get them to turn the rifles against their oppressors.

Another question emerges from all this: can an identical situation occur in one or the other country of Western Europe, so that it offers the proletariat the possibility of concentrating its forces until s to seize power? Obviously, we cannot absolutely rule it out, even if that seems very improbable to us.

But revolutionary strategy is not to be confused with a calculation of probabilities, all subject to the vagaries of chance; the revolution demands at all times that we start from the real conditions, from the experiences that flow daily from the struggle; it is not a collection of past experiences, nor is it a guessing game.

### What is wrong and what is true in the new revolutionary movement in Western Europe

What makes Mr. Becker lose his head is the whole series of perversions of the established principles that he sees in revolutionary groups and organizations when these affirm, with excessive ambitions, "that they are the front -guard of the class struggle, guided by Marxism-Leninism, and that their goal is revolution and communism".

In addition - he complains, hysterical - "their urban guerrilla warfare is defined as the practical expression of true internationalism".

And to top it off, what he feels to be a real sacrilege, an intolerable intromission in the affairs of his church, is that some of these groups have started to "write about the need for a new Communist International" and that they see the "Guerrilla Front" as a kind of step forward in this direction.

Well, for our part, we are not going to commit the stupidity to defend this movement as a whole, nor that of all the political conceptions which it is putting forward, in the same way as we do not approve of each and every one of his actions; we know that in this movement converge and fight different currents (and not just a Mr. Becker), among which some are indisputably strong subjectivists, anarchists and even openly nationalists.

This has always happened in movements in the process of formation.

Heterogeneity and an indefinite ideological background are the characteristics that best define the current overall movement.

From this stems the cult of spontaneity and the preponderant role that some give to armed actions devoid, many times, of the clear political orientation that only a true Marxist-Leninist party can bring.

It is the absence of such parties in most Western European countries that has made this movement a formidable breeding ground for the strangest bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and conceptions.

But, unless you are a perfect ignorant, who would dare today to deny that within it work and wage an incessant political and ideological struggle the only healthy forces, which are not corrupt to the bottom, the communist militants honest people who survived the "pro-Chinese" and "pro-Albanian" debacle of the 60s and 70s?

Who - unless you are a revisionist or worse ... (assuming that there is something worse than that) - would dare to deny that this movement, despite its heterogeneity, or the rigidity that is detected there other times, his exaggerated romanticism, etc., does not represent a gigantic step forward compared to this mixture of aesthetes and grimacing?

There is no need for Mr. Becker to expand on considerations about the "failure" of the "terrorist path", as if the "parties" that he represents offer us the joy of a victorious revolution every day; it is useless that it gets carried away while making an abundant demagogy using the repentants, as if in the prisons of Italy and other countries there were not hundreds of militants "serving" very long punishments, subjected to endless tortures, because they do not renounce their revolutionary ideas.

In reality, what Becker proposes in the name of Marxism-Leninism is none other than the mass passage of all these revolutionaries and many Communists on the side of the repentant, on the side of informers and collaborators of the police and reaction.

In this way it tries to complete the dirty work that the imperialist bourgeoisie, despite all its repressive and propaganda apparatus, has never been able to and can never succeed.

At no time did Becker defend the Marxist position, neither before this important question, nor before any other problem.

According to him, it should be considered a miracle that after the reformist betrayals, that after the apostasy of others and the abandonment of almost everything else, the cream of Europe's youth, the most sagacious young people, the healthiest and most intelligent have opted for communism and are busy finding the way.

It is in any case useless to say that this miracle is not due to the church of Becker, but that it obeys rather causes completely foreign to its opposing evangelizing work, that it obeys - as we have just seen it - to the force of attraction that Marxism-Leninism and communism exert on more and more broad sectors of workers and combative youth.

On this point, Becker's doctrinarism indicates nothing other than extreme subjectivism.

For him, as we had the opportunity to note at the beginning of his article, there is in the world only what is white and what is black; this is this, this is that, these are totally different things, unrelated, unrelated to each other, and, more importantly, without a process of developing inside this or that struggle, change or transformation.

Transition states also do not exist for Mr. Becker; that is, for him one thing is as it is and cannot be transformed into another different.

That there exists within the revolutionary movement a struggle of tendencies, that they cannot or does not want to recognize, because for them things and phenomena exist only in a "pure" state, statically.

This method frees him from looking for the root causes and separating the wheat from the chaff.

Obviously, it is much easier to stuff everything in one bag labeled "terrorism" and to throw it overboard as if it were a pack of rabid dogs.

In politics, this idealistic conception and its scholastic, metaphysical method - of which Mr. Becker has already shown us sufficient samples - are reflected in the greatest aberrations that one can imagine.

But let's leave this question and what is pointed out at the beginning of this paragraph for a better opportunity