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IN OUR TIME



SAINT JOSEPH: ENTREPRENEUR AND FATHER OF LIBERTY

JESÚS HUERTA DE SOTO

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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SAINT JOSEPH: ENTREPRENEUR AND FATHER OF LIBERTY

JESÚS HUERTA DE SOTO

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: *In this essay, I will use as my guide the little we know about the life of Saint Joseph and the teachings he passed on to his Son and attempt to connect the Holy Scriptures with the essential principles of the Austrian School of economics and its characteristic pursuit of liberty. I have ventured (or rather dared) to write in first person, in the form of a set of reflections which I imagine Saint Joseph himself might have had at different times and in various circumstances in his fascinating, little-known life.*

* * *

Today I found out that Emperor Augustus has decided to take a census of all the taxpayers in the empire and that everyone must register in his own hometown. I cannot believe the statist obsession with regulating our lives – and particularly with collecting more and more taxes ever more efficiently. But most obvious is the arrogance and frivolity of those in power, who decide the fate of our lives on a whim, regardless of the cost or

harm they might inflict. Although in light of what is written in the first book of Samuel (8:11-17), this should not surprise me. In fact, this very passage was read to us in the synagogue yesterday, the Sabbath day: "... 'The rights of the king who will rule you will be as follows: He will take your sons and assign them to his chariots and horses, and they will run before his chariot. He will also appoint ... them to do his plowing and his harvesting, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will use your daughters as ointment-makers, as cooks, and as bakers. He will take the best of your fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his officials. He will tithe your crops and your vineyards, and give the revenue to his eunuchs and his slaves. He will take your male and female servants, as well as your best oxen and your asses, and use them to do his work. He will tithe your flocks and you yourselves will become his slaves.'"¹ What a grave error (and a tragic sin against God) it was to ask for a ruler! Especially since, as is written in Judges 21:25, "in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all Bible passages will be taken from the New American Bible, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM.

[had the freedom to do] what he thought best." This refers to external freedom, which is a precondition for everything, and we can achieve it only by liberating ourselves from the coercion of states and rulers. However, apart from this (undoubtedly very precious) civil liberty, human beings also need internal freedom, the ability to discern what is right and to do it, while avoiding sin, which enslaves us and clouds our understanding. Surely the Messiah the prophets and Scriptures speak of will bring us both freedoms ...

Moreover, we cannot judge only the gentile Romans for their fiscal voracity. It is absurd to fo-

tyrannize their people. But most surprising is the fact that – as I have just mentioned – Yahweh had warned us through Samuel of what would happen to us if we insisted on being subject to a state and authorities, and God gave us what we wanted when, after Samuel had warned us, we answered: "No matter, we want a king over us. That way, we will be like all other nations." What a justification for subjecting ourselves as slaves – that we would be like the other nations! What hypocrisy! Honestly, Lord, I hope the day of our liberation arrives, when we come to our senses and realize the grave error we committed at that time: when,

We cannot judge the Roman Gentiles solely for their fiscal voracity. It is absurd to focus only on the speck in someone else's eye when, perhaps, we ourselves have an even bigger one in our own eye.

cus solely on the splinter in our neighbors' eyes when we ourselves might have a wooden beam in our own. For instance, long before the Roman emperor, Moses himself ordered that a census be taken for tax purposes, and each of us was to pay no less than six grams of silver (Exodus 30:11-16). David also insisted on conducting a census, though to his credit, he immediately realized he had committed a grave sin in doing so, and when he repented, Yahweh ultimately forgave him (2 Samuel 24:18). And King Solomon built our great temple to God using no fewer than 30,000 slaves (1 Kings 5:27) and oppressing his people with extremely heavy taxes (1 Kings 14 and 2 Chronicles 9:13), which exceeded 660 gold talents every year, or the twenty-three thousand kilos of annual gold mentioned in the Chronicles. What is worse, the son of Solomon, Rehoboam, sought to increase the tax burden even further, to the point that a revolt broke out by taxpayers led by Jeroboam, which divided the kingdom in two and brought us all kinds of misfortunes (1 Kings 12 and 13). The truth is that all rulers, even our own, oppress and

in rejection of you, our Father, we asked you for a king (1 Samuel 8:7). In your abundant goodness, may you forgive us our grave sin and free us from this biblical curse of states and their rulers. Meanwhile, there is no choice but to humbly obey and prepare for the journey to Bethlehem.

I find myself in a very complicated situation. My wife, Mary, is approaching her ninth month of pregnancy, and my only option will be to take her with me to Bethlehem, where my family's land is. I cannot leave her on her own at this time, and – with some luck – once I have registered with the tax authorities, we will be able to leave Bethlehem and travel to the nearby home of her cousin Elizabeth, so she can help Mary when the time comes for her to give birth and during the early weeks of the Child's life. Yet I keep turning over in my mind the mysterious words of Micah (5:1-4) about my people: "But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel..." Although in the synagogue we were taught this referred to a leader against the



Fresco from the Church of Santa Maria del Porto (Ravenna, Italy).

Assyrians, who knows? In any case, it is a relatively difficult journey and not free of risks. I will propose the plan to Mary and see what she thinks. At any rate, as always, God will provide...

* * *

Before I set out on the trip with Mary, I must finish and hand over the last of the work which I had agreed to do and is still pending. I have always tried to take the utmost care with the jobs I am given and to produce work of the highest quality, just as I learned from working with my father in

I have learned the rudiments of their language and culture necessary to communicate with them. For example, their word for the family home is *oikos*, and their word for the art of managing a household well and keeping it always in running order is *oikonomía*. It is curious how much one can learn by working and by doing things well, keeping silent, and listening attentively.

Clearly, if I embark on the journey to Bethlehem, I must first select my most cherished tools. I will need them not only to put together a crib when the Child is born but also to get back to work and be able to go on earning my living in

The profession of artisan carpenter and master builder requires planning, effort, and concentration, as well as diligence and good relations with your clients and workers.

the workshop my grandfather set up. The profession of carpenter-craftsman and master builder requires planning, effort, and concentration, besides diligence and good relations with customers and workers. To repair the wooden coffered ceiling in a house; assemble beams and wooden structures; build doors, tables, closets, and furniture in general; one must select the wood, work with the proper tools in the shop, and use skill in the construction and assembly. I try to carefully study each job I take on, to mull it over, and to find creative solutions to problems. Also, I have to do my calculations, speak with suppliers (most of whom are long-time acquaintances and friends), hire the necessary laborers, and provide customers (almost always neighbors or people I know) with a tailored estimate. I must thank God, because my neighbors in Nazareth and the surrounding areas, as well as many of their acquaintances, rely on me whenever they need to make a repair or improvement to their homes. Even some Greek-speaking Gentiles in this part of Galilee have depended on me and place orders with me, and thanks to them,

the Jerusalem area. I must see about choosing the most valuable and useful tools I can transport in the saddlebags of our donkey, who will also need to carry Mary for most of the distance, since her pregnancy is advanced. It would be ideal for us to take two donkeys, but I don't know if I will be able to buy a second one. Perhaps I can exchange something for one or buy one if I get a good price for the shop tools I cannot take with me. I will be sorry to leave any of them behind, especially the ones I inherited from my father; I have spent so much time improving them and keeping them in good condition. Others I have purchased over the years or built with my own hands with considerable effort, sacrifice, and saving. And now, I am sure they will come in handy for some acquaintance of mine who will value them and may even be able to give me something for them.

In my work, I have learned that productivity multiplies when I have good capital equipment in the form of tools that can be obtained only by saving a significant part of what I receive for the jobs I do. From the time I was young, my father taught



Saint Joseph the Carpenter, church in Sebechleby (Slovakia). Fresco by Italian painter Sonino (1900).

me the importance of our equipment and our toolbox and of always keeping them in good condition by repairing them, dealing with wear and tear, and even – when possible – adding to them with the portion of our income that we were able to save. He also taught me to do accurate calculations so we would have enough resources (wooden beams, construction materials, and tools) to finish each job. In that way, we would avoid the embarrassment of taking on – without the necessary materials – overly ambitious projects that could not be finished and, as a result, arousing both the anger of the customer and the laughter and ridi-

is poor and looks forward to them.” (Deuteronomy 24:14-15). And, as our Maker well knows, I have at times been under great stress, especially when my customers have been late in paying me and I have had to do a balancing act to continue paying my workers their wage. Fortunately, my customers caught up on their payments when I told them about my urgent need to be away, and the money they paid me, along with what I had saved, has permitted me, thanks be to God, to wrap things up with my workers and pay them what I owed them. I was even able to give some of them more than I owed, since I am familiar with the personal

I have always strived to strictly comply with the mandate of our holy books: “You shall not exploit the laborer, the poor, and the needy; you shall give him his wages each day, for he is in need and depends on his wages.”

cule of colleagues. An acquaintance of mine, a fellow craftsman, once made precisely this blunder on a project. So whenever I am commissioned to build a tower, I first sit down and carefully calculate the cost, taking into account everything I will need. That way, I can determine whether or not I will have all that is necessary to complete the project, and no one can reproach me later for having begun to build when finishing was impossible.

But perhaps the most important thing now is to say goodbye to the workers I have hired and to whom I still owe some money. Tomorrow I will be sure to pay them their wage, thank them for all the help they have given me, and explain to them my difficult personal situation, that I am about to become a father and am obliged to travel with Mary to register in Bethlehem for the census. I have always sought to strictly obey the command in our holy books: “You shall not defraud a poor and needy hired servant, whether he be one of your own countrymen or one of the aliens who live in your communities. You shall pay him each day’s wages before sundown on the day itself, since he

situations of all of them and know that two are also going to be fathers and are in great need. I have set aside an additional amount for them, and I plan to give it to them, though they have put in the same amount of work as the rest, and though their workmates may not understand and may complain to me about it ... I would love to help all of them, but my resources are very modest. I wish I could multiply the loaves as Elisha did and make them all happy and satisfied (2 Kings 4:42-44). Yet I am not a prophet, but only a humble craftsman who is self-employed, and whose resources are always very limited. However, I am not unjust to anyone, as I pay the agreed-upon amount. I am free to do as I wish in my affairs and to be particularly kind to some and pay them more, and this should not arouse envy in the rest ...

Another matter of concern is that it has been a long time since I have heard from the steward of the land my family has rented out in the Bethlehem area. A diligent and loyal steward is always a blessing from God, but until I get to Bethlehem, I will not be able to check on the state of the land



Basilica of Sacro Monte, Varallo (Italy). Fresco by P.G. Gilardi (1881).

nor the accounts of the steward. May this visit not bring unpleasant surprises, and may this lack of news have a natural explanation ...

* * *

I am immensely happy watching our newborn Son in the arms of Mary. And I thank God over and over for having brought us to this moment, despite all of the difficulties and trials we have had to go through. At the end of the exhausting journey from Nazareth, we arrived in the city of Bethlehem, which was in a state of near chaos and completely

most imperceptible manner, but in whose infinite goodness we can always trust. And thus, shortly after the birth, the world stood still around us in a halo of infinite joy, and the stable began to fill up with shepherds and humble visitors who longed to see the Child of whom they had just heard wonders from some mysterious figures ... And what else could I do but take care of Mary, protect the Child, and attend to our visitors as well as possible, with the little we had? And though we could never have imagined our Child would be born in such precarious circumstances, his birth has been the happiest moment of our lives and

Throughout human history, and as our sacred texts attest, gold has been the most valued and widespread medium of exchange, the best form of money that makes it possible to acquire almost anything, anywhere.

packed with people who, like us, had come to register. There was no space available in any inn, no room free in the home of my distant relatives and family in Bethlehem. I could find nothing, despite great effort, recommendations from friends and acquaintances, and all of the contacts and connections I could think of. And Mary, very heavily pregnant, looked at me again and again with tenderness, understanding, and also worry. When the contractions suddenly began and she let me know the birth was imminent, I very nervously explained the situation to a kind innkeeper, who did what he could and, with the help of his wife, made available to us their stable. We immediately accepted, thanked them gratefully, and went in. With haste, I tidied up and prepared the space and looked around for something I could set up or use as a crib for the Child; ultimately, we chose a manger that appeared to us minimally suitable.

Then, in the middle of the night, the Child was born, and a series of events took place that I can scarcely understand, except as signs from Yahweh, who always acts in a mysterious, subtle, al-

has made us completely forget all our anxieties, hardships, and misfortunes.

We have also been astonished by the arrival, with their entourage, of three distinguished figures who were also intent on seeing the Child and meeting “the King of Israel who has just been born and whose star we have been following from afar.” Their visit has filled us with a sense of strangeness and honor, and two aspects of it have made a particularly strong impression on us and have given me a lot to think about.

The first is the humility and devotion with which these three gentile princes, who do not belong to our people, have knelt down – with great admiration and infinite respect and joy – to adore our Son. In fact, they presented us with gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and even a bag of gold coins, which I did not initially feel right about accepting, but in view of their insistence and our great need, I have very gratefully welcomed. Throughout the history of mankind (as our holy books attest), gold has been the most valued and widespread medium of exchange, the best form of money, and



Fresco in the church of San Francisco de Borja (Valencia, Spain), by Miguel Vaguer (1971).

it permits one to purchase almost anything anywhere. It will enable us to meet the Child's needs in this new setting and will also make it possible for me to replace the tools I have had to leave behind and to make a fresh start as a carpenter-craftsman, offering my services in this area. I am sure Zechariah will help me get the word out. He is the husband of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, who – to everyone's surprise, because she was along in years – gave birth a few months ago to a boy they named John. So, I plan to use part of the gold to set up my carpentry workshop here, and what is left – as long as I do not need to reinvest

ly unthinkable to defraud those who had placed their trust in the sanctity of the Place and in the sacred inviolability of a temple venerated all over the world." And priests "... begged him in heaven who had given the law about deposits to keep the deposits safe for those who had made them." Immediately afterward, the entire village began "... imploring the almighty Lord to keep the deposits safe and secure for those who had placed them in trust." What I cannot understand is how, in these days, one can receive interest from the temple bank if, as our holy books command, it simply holds and guards the deposits received, as it is

One thing is clear: according to our sacred books, at least since the time of the Maccabees, our temple already functioned as a bank, receiving deposits.

it in my business – I plan to deposit in the temple in Jerusalem so that, at least until I need it, it can be earning some interest. Our visit to present the Child in the temple, in observance of the law, will give me a good opportunity to do that.

It has always really caught my attention and surprised me that our temple engages in banking activity. Banking seems so unrelated to the worship of Yahweh, which should be the essential, and indeed the exclusive, activity and purpose of the temple. But one thing is clear: According to our holy books, at least from the time of the Maccabees, our temple was already acting as a bank and receiving deposits. If I remember correctly, in 2 Maccabees 3:10 and following, we read about Heliodorus, who had been sent by King Seleucus and sought to confiscate the riches of the temple for the royal treasury, and "the high priest explained that there were some deposits belonging to widows and orphans"² and that "... it was utter-

obligated to do, and as the Book of Maccabees expressly points out. That is precisely what Gabriel, for instance, did with the 350 kilos of silver that Tobit placed with him on deposit and which Gabriel safeguarded impeccably until Tobit's son Tobiah, accompanied by the angel Raphael, went to withdraw it (Tobit 4:20 and following). I am a craftsman, and I know one can pay interest only if he does business with the money received. Of course, every craftsman or merchant can, with effort, ingenuity, and God's help, even multiply the talents received. And if not, at least the passive attitude of doing nothing but depositing them makes it possible to obtain from the bank some payment in the form of interest. But obviously, the temple can pay interest only if it neglects the obligation established by God to safeguard the entirety of the amount received and instead appropriates deposits to lend them out and do business with them ... That is why the feverish activity of the money

² 2 Macc. 3:10, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE), <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Maccabees%203&version=NRSVCE>.



Altarpiece in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Prague (Czech Republic) painted by S.G. Rudl in 1895.

changers and merchants within the temple itself – receiving deposits, granting and demanding the repayment of loans, and exchanging all sorts of goods – is so unsettling. One might say that our Holy Temple has become an extremely active market – or even a hub – of speculation. It is not that I have anything against the market and merchants; on the contrary, as a craftsman, many times I can even consider myself to be one of them. But I believe that, at the very least, the Holy Temple is not the appropriate place. And furthermore, all signs suggest that it is failing to fulfill the safeguarding obligation established by Yahweh and is holding

ten been on my mind ... This all seems very strange to me: that so much commotion broke out in Jerusalem, to the point of convening an assembly of scholars to answer the princes; that it all appears to have come to nothing in the end; and that the Magi were sent on their way with vague directions and arrived by themselves to see us. And on top of that, we must take into account that King Herod is widely reputed to be cold, calculating, frivolous, and cruel. Furthermore, when taking leave of us after giving us their gifts, the princes told me they had decided to return to their country directly, without passing through Jerusalem to

What I cannot understand is how today one can receive interest from the Temple Bank if, as our sacred books command, it merely holds the deposits received in custody, as is its obligation.

at any moment only a fraction of the deposits it has received and should be safeguarding. I do not know how our religious authorities, beginning with the high priest, condone this state of affairs, and I pray Yahweh will send us someone capable of setting things straight. Meanwhile, just in case, upon reconsidering my original plan, it appears to me to be more prudent to store myself the gold coins given to me by the Magi from the east and not to deposit them in our temple when we go to offer our newborn first Son ...

There is a second thing that concerns me even more, and I cannot stop thinking about it. The princes who came to adore the Child came, I was told, from Jerusalem itself, where they had arrived shortly before by following a star. There, they were even received and entertained by cruel King Herod, whom they naively asked if he knew where the Child who would be King of Israel was to be born. In fact, their very arrival at Bethlehem was due to the directions given to them by Herod himself and by his scribes and learned men, who dusted off the prophecy of Micah that has so of-

give an account of what they had seen and done ... All of this worries me a great deal, and I do not know what might happen from here. I certainly do not wish to frighten Mary with my precautions, but I must take care of both her and the Child, and I do not know the best way to do it now, nor what preventative measures to take. Dear God, please enlighten me and show me the way ...

* * *

All of my fears have come true. When we went up to Jerusalem to offer our firstborn, all sorts of rumors were circulating about the fury of Herod, who apparently felt he had been mocked by the Magi and was plotting something with his advisors. Nothing good, I am sure. Also, in the temple, we were approached by Anna the prophetess and a righteous, elderly man named Simeon, who, in reference to our Son, warned Mary: “And you yourself a sword will pierce ...”

Nothing good can be expected from the authorities, who continually oppress and tyrannize



Abstract painting of Saint Joseph the Carpenter by contemporary artist Thoom.

their people. Samuel warned us of this when we committed the sin of asking for a king to rule over us, when we had been living in freedom. What a contrast there is between violent, state power based on arrogance and the non-violent power of the true King Zechariah has promised us (9:9-10). Without a doubt, arrogance is the gravest and deadliest sin characteristic of states and their rulers. In the psalm, David even prays to God: "From arrogant ones restrain your servant; let them never control me. Then shall I be blameless, innocent of grave sin" (Psalm 19 [18]:14). The conceit of a ruler involves the belief that he is as wise as God

forward? It is fortunate that God enlightened me and I did not deposit in the temple the gold coins the foreign princes gave us, and I still have them in my possession. Without a doubt, they amount to a considerable sum which, if I manage it well, will enable us to start the long journey immediately and spend what we must along the way, especially at inns, since with such a small child, we cannot sleep out in the open every night. And as for Herod, the frivolous and cruel criminal, I am sure he would invoke *raison d'état* – the need to protect his power, the alliance with the Romans, and even "peace" in his kingdom – to justify doing

The arrogance of the ruler consists in believing himself to be as wise as God and, therefore, entitled to decide *ad hoc* what is right or wrong, and to act according to the whim and impulse of the moment in order to maintain and increase his power.

and, therefore, entitled to decide *ad hoc* right from wrong and to act, based on the whim and impulse of each moment, to retain and expand his power. Indeed, this is the gravest sin imaginable, the one the serpent used to tempt us and make us fall when he promised Eve and Adam that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would "be like Gods." In short, it is as if all the nations of the earth were under the power and command of the Evil One and he had turned them over as he pleased to the worst manipulators, hypocrites, and criminals.

Moreover, tonight I have received a clear message in a dream, and now I understand it fully. We must leave Bethlehem right away, because Herod is looking for the Child and wants to kill him. We cannot even wait until tomorrow. I am going to wake Mary and quickly make preparations to leave and get out of Bethlehem as soon as possible. My top priority now is to get the Child and my wife to safety. But where will we go? How can we move

away with a defenseless pretender to the throne. And if he does not find the Child, it would not surprise me at all if he ordered the murder of all the boys his age in the area. We might then fully understand the words of Jeremiah (31:15) about the grief-stricken sobs of Rachel, whose family was always from Bethlehem, over the loss of her children: "In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping! Rachel mourns her children, she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more." But, as Isaiah writes (10:1 and following), "Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes ... What will you do on the day of punishment ... so as not to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain?"³

* * *

With God's help, I have decided the direction we will take. We have set out for Alexandria in Egypt.

3 Isaiah 10:1 and following, NRSVCE, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+10&version=NRSVCE>.



Contemporary illustration by CarryPics (India).

We will go directly to Ashkelon on the coast, and there we will book passage to sail for Alexandria. Fortunately, I have the gold from the Magi to pay for the passage, and I will be able to get something for our donkey, who will not be allowed to go aboard. We are so sad to part with this good, faithful, and gentle animal that has helped us so much in the moments of distress we have experienced since we left Nazareth!

We will be okay in Alexandria. It is the empire's second most important city. It is second only to Rome, and there is always a great demand for workers there. That is why a large colony of Jewish craftsman and merchants have emigrated and live there. I know some of them by word of mouth, and they will be able to help us. Also, several of my colleagues have told me there is a very large volume of public and private construction there, and it will be easier for me to offer my services as a skilled carpenter and building contractor. I am sure they will soon see my worth, and I will end up receiving commissions and doing jobs that will permit me to support my family. Moreover, I know the rudiments of the Greek language, at least with respect to the construction business, and that will help me even more to find work and to build a good reputation for myself.

In short, we must emigrate to Egypt and live and try to prosper there as emigrants in a foreign country with a very different culture and surrounded by Gentiles. But I hope the inhabitants and, particularly, the members of the Jewish colony will receive us with open arms and treat us well. Now I understand the clear admonitions of our holy books about the good treatment we must always give to emigrants. I have tried to strictly heed these warnings whenever I have crossed paths with emigrants throughout my life, and I have even hired some as workers for the jobs I have received as a building contractor. In Deuteronomy 27:19, we read "Cursed be he

who violates the rights of the alien ...," and a little before that, in the same book, we are again told "You shall not defraud a poor and needy hired servant, whether he be one of your own countrymen or one of the aliens who live in your communities" (Deuteronomy 24:14).

At any rate, in the face of so many uncertainties and worries, we can only entrust ourselves to our Almighty God, whose designs are mysterious and who usually acts in ways that are subtle, quiet, and at times almost imperceptible, yet always kind and good. We place ourselves in his hands and let him lead us, and so, as we walk as fast as we can toward the coast to escape from Herod and sail for Egypt, I recover my inner peace and tranquility by repeating again and again the words of my favorite psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.⁴

Villa Dolores, Formentor, July 27, 2023
Feast day of Saint Celestine I

4 Psalm 23, NRSVCE, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&version=NRSVCE>.

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION, THIS MAGAZINE AND ITS SPANISH AND ENGLISH SUPPLEMENTS

The publisher of *AVANCE de la Libertad* magazine and the supplement you are holding is the Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty (Fundalib), based in Madrid. Since 2015, the Foundation has been working in Spain and internationally for the cause of economic and personal freedom for all human beings. Fundalib is an entity associated with the prestigious Atlas Network, based in Washington, which brings together some 500 pro-freedom think tanks in a hundred countries. It is also a member of European networks such as Epicenter and ELF. The Foundation researches different aspects of freedom in various areas. In particular, it periodically compiles several national and international indices on the state of freedom, including the Regional Tax Competitiveness Index (IACF) and the Economic Freedom Index for Spain's Cities (ILECE). The IACF was one of the six finalists for the prestigious Templeton Prize in 2024, and the ILECE was awarded the Europe Liberty Award in 2020. Fundalib has won several other awards and distinctions, notably first place in the international think tank competition organized by the European Resource Bank in Chişinău (Moldova) in 2019. The two documentaries produced by the Foundation have been included in the official selection of festivals in the United States and South Korea,



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and one of them won an international specialized festival (New York, 2023). The Foundation supports various civil society activist organizations and is a top publisher of books on the ideas of freedom. The Foundation's publications are available on the fundalib.org website, including the series of Brief Reports on Current Issues. Since June 2020, the Foundation has been publishing the aforementioned monthly magazine, which provides readers with brief opinion pieces aimed at spreading ideas throughout society. With a classical liberal and libertarian orientation, the magazine covers the entire ideological spectrum from classical liberalism to agorist and ancap positions, as well as objectivist philosophy. Fundalib thus seeks to promote the various families of individualism, aware of the fearsome resurgence of various forms of collectivism in our time, generally through the various populisms that are regaining political ground.

Since 2021, this magazine of short articles has been complemented by the supplement *Cuadernos para el Avance de la Libertad*. What you are looking at is an English edition of one of those *Cuadernos (Papers)*. On page 2 of this Paper, readers will find the code and web address to subscribe to the magazine, and on the website there are several other options for joining and supporting Fundalib.



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