



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (018)

TITLE: *Entre la Libertad y la Servidumbre*

AUTHOR: Armando Ribas

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I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

Armando Ribas's *Entre la Libertad y la Servidumbre* is a profound philosophical and ethical investigation into the origins of open societies and the intellectual traps of 20th-century totalitarianism. Published following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the work serves as a vibrant defense of liberal capitalism, not as an end-state of history, but as a continuous liberation from the dogmas of historicism (Hegel and Marx).

Ribas introduces the seminal concept of the **"Third Stream" (La Tercera Vertiente)**—a synthesis of reason, sentiment, and transcendence. He argues that the Anglo-Saxon Enlightenment (Locke, Hume, the American Revolution) provided a viable path for human prosperity by acknowledging the fallibility of reason and the necessity of institutional constraints on power. In contrast, the French Enlightenment and its rationalist "Jacobinism" often paved the way for modern despotism. For scholars of Latin American studies, this book is essential for its application of these principles to regional challenges, specifically regarding the institutional history of Argentina and the ethical pathways for a transition in Cuba.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This volume offers a multi-disciplinary framework for exploring the intersections of ethics, political science, and history.

The "Third Stream" (La Tercera Vertiente) as Synthesis:

Analyze Ribas's definition of the "Third Stream." How does he reconcile reason with human sentiment and a sense of transcendence?

Discuss the claim that totalitarianism arises from a "mystification of reason" or an "exacerbation of faith." How does the liberal model proposed by Ribas act as a safeguard against these extremes?

Epistemological Optimism vs. Rationalist Despotism:

Examine the distinction between the English "Glorious Revolution" (1688) and the French Revolution (1789). Why does Ribas view the latter as a "contradiction" to the concept of individual rights?

Compare the ethical foundations of David Hume (sentiments and habits) with the Kantian "Categorical Imperative." How does Ribas link Kantian rationalism to the rise of state-driven totalities?

Hegelian and Marxist Historicism:

Critically evaluate Ribas's critique of Hegel and Marx. Why does he characterize their relationship as a "false alternative"?

Discuss the role of "Reason of State" and "Historic Destiny" in justifying political oppression in the 20th century.



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Institutional Heritage in Latin America:

Analyze the "Argentine Miracle" of 1853 through Ribas's lens. How did the adoption of liberal constitutionalism lead to unprecedented prosperity?

Discuss the "Ethics and the Cuban Transition." What are the practical and philosophical challenges Ribas identifies for liberating the region from its "liberators"?

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary connections suitable for graduate-level seminars.

The Art of Being Free: Drawing on the quote by Tocqueville, discuss why Ribas considers the "learning of freedom" to be an arduous and ongoing process rather than a static declaration of rights. How does this apply to modern Latin American democracies?

A Critique of the "End of History": While Ribas celebrates the fall of the Berlin Wall, he avoids the trap of a final "End of History" (Fukuyama). Discuss how he views liberal capitalism as a "new opportunity" for human adventure rather than a final destination.

The Role of Religion in the West: Analyze Ribas's chapter on "Liberalism and the Church." How has the historical tension between secular reason and religious transcendence shaped the Western concept of the individual? Focus on his analysis of 1688 and the 1853 Argentine Constitution.

Market vs. State: Explore the relationship between private interests and the general interest within a legal framework. How does Ribas defend the market as a mechanism for order that respects individual freedom?

The Concept of "Decadence": In Chapter X, Ribas discusses the problem of decadence. How does he define it within an ethical and political context? Is decadence for Ribas a biological inevitability or a result of failing to uphold the "Third Stream"?

Comparative Constitutionalism: Compare the institutional frameworks described by Ribas (Locke, Montesquieu, Filadelfia 1787) with the traditional political structures seen in many Latin American nations. What "fallacies" does he identify in the region's approach to Western civilization?

IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *Entre la Libertad y la Servidumbre*, providing avenues for deeper research.

Primary Text:

- Ribas, Armando. *Entre la Libertad y la Servidumbre*. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 018)

Key Secondary Scholarship & Referenced Figures:

- **Alberdi, Juan Bautista.** *Peregrinación de Luz del Día*. (Foundational institutional critique).
- **Hume, David.** *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Book III) and *History of England*.
- **Johnson, Paul.** *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties*. (Crucial context for 20th-century totalities).
- **Locke, John.** *Two Treatises of Government*.
- **Montesquieu, Baron de.** *The Spirit of the Laws*.
- **Popper, Karl.** *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. (For context on anti-historicism).



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- Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*.

Additional Resources:

- Analysis of the 1853 Argentine Constitution.
 - Studies on the "Perestroika" and the historical shift of 1989.
 - Research on the "Escuela de Chicago" and the influence of liberal economics in Latin America.
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V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

- [Hispanic Heritage Thinkers: 7-Book Bundle.](#)
- Other titles by Armando Ribas: *Rule of Law: The Path to Freedom, Los '90, La Falacia de la Civilización Occidental.*
- Hugo Gambini's historical biographies on Che Guevara and Peronism.

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