

Statistics on Freedom

by Roque Dalton

Freedom of the press for Salvadoran people
costs 20 centavos a day
counting only those who can read
and have more than 20 centavos left over
after eating barely enough to stay alive.

Freedom of the press for the big
industrial merchants and publicists
sells for thousands and change for a black and white page
and I don't know how much for a square inch
of text or illustration.

Freedom of the press
for Don Napoleon Viera Altamirano
and Dutriz and Pinto and the owners of El Mundo
is worth millions:
Which includes buildings
constructed on military principles
which includes machines and paper and ink
the financial investments of their enterprises
which day by day they receive from the big
industrial merchants and publicists
and from the government and the North American and
other embassies
which they extract by exploitation of their workers
which they extort by blackmail ("by not printing
the denunciation of that most distinguished gentleman
or by opportunistically printing the secret
that will sink the smallest fish in the sea")
which they earn from a concept of
"exclusive rights," for example
"LOVE IS" towels . . . "LOVE IS" figurines . . .
which they collect daily
from all Salvadorans (and Guatemalans)
who have the available 20 centavos.

In capitalist logic
freedom of the press is simply another business
and its value to each
is in proportion to what one pays for it:
for the people 20 centavos a head a day

Socialist Stories حكايات اشتراكية

for the freedom of the press,
for Viera Altamirano Dutriz Pinto, etc.
millions of dollars a head a day
for the freedom of the press.