

my court, 500 are drug related.”

A drop in the price of cocaine—a gram now costs between 25 and 30 australes (\$35 to \$40)—has led to increased consumption nationwide. Dr. Carlos Cagliotti, founder and director of Cenariosco (National Center for Social Rehabilitation), reports that his center now receives 100 new cases a month for drug rehabilitation. Between 1980 and 1984, the center received 36 new cases monthly. In 1985, the figure jumped to 85, and today approaches 100.

Future of a nation

Argentina’s economic crisis didn’t begin under Raúl Alfonsín. But the existence of the drug trade, and its impact on the nation’s culture and social fabric, has become most visible only within the last year. During that same period, the Austral plan was gutting workers’ wages by 40%, causing a drop in living standards, and cutting off credit and investment, which has put tens of thousands out of productive employment.

The social and moral disintegration accompanying this economic collapse can be gleaned from the pages of Buenos Aires’ major newspapers. They include almost daily accounts of violence, crime, and deaths related to drug consumption or trafficking—many of them involving children. *Somos* magazine reports that the average age of most addicts is now 16, down from 25 a few years ago.

In early June, the death from a drug overdose of 12-year-old Marcelo Cerruolo, shocked the inhabitants of Buenos Aires. The son of a poor, working-class family, Marcelo and his classmates had for some time been regularly consuming marijuana and inhaling glue or other substances provided by an adult who came by the school.

The case of Marcelo Cerruolo is not an isolated one. A study done recently of one poor section of Buenos Aires found, that of 48,000 intoxicated children and adolescents, (representing 70% of the youth population of the Ciudadela Norte area), 65% consumed alcohol and inhalants, 25% smoked marijuana, and the 10% remaining consumed psychopharmacological drugs.

The “drugs of poverty” consumed by these children are glue and other combustible substances, which can be purchased at the local drugstore or bookstore, or the corner newspaper stand. In Buenos Aires, a significant degree of street crime—assaults on pedestrians, shops, and cars—is committed by the “poxi gangs”: bands of poor youth who daily inhale these substances.

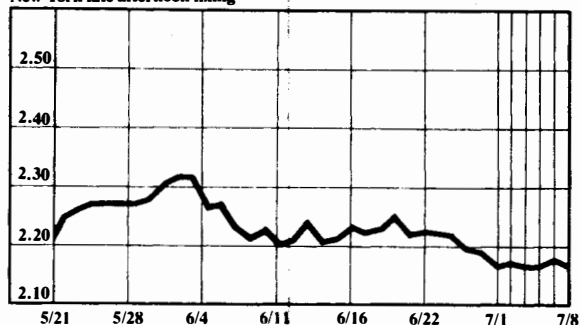
Dr. Cagliotti has documented the devastating effect which glue inhalation has on the body’s vital organs, producing severe respiratory ailments, weight loss, intestinal hemorrhaging, change in blood pressure, and psychosis, among other things. Death from overdose of glue is not uncommon.

In recent international conferences, authorities have pointed out that Argentina is quickly entering the category of countries like Colombia or Mexico, where 10 children per day die from glue inhalation.

Currency Rates

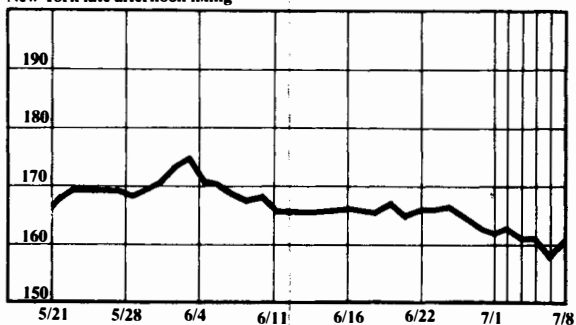
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



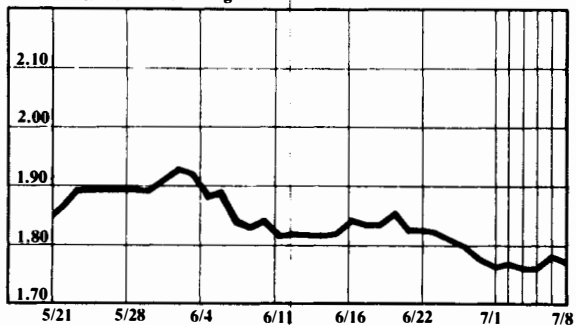
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing

