

time that a minimum of \$450 monthly is required for physical survival.

Subsequently, the government introduced legislation to privatize the state oil company Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF), which included a clause stating that part of the debt owed to pensioners 85 years of age and above, an amount totaling \$300 million, would be paid with a portion of funds derived from the privatization. However, after the Argentine Congress approved the legislation, President Menem vetoed that clause, alleging that "the state is in no condition to allocate \$300 million for the 240,000 pensioners above 85 years of age." The government then decided to use 30% of the funds resulting from the privatization to repurchase the Bocon bonds, and pay the retirees over 85 with these.

The State Social Security Administration, which is in charge of raising revenues for pensions, actually increased its revenues by 47% last year. Nonetheless, as reported by the Sept. 15 edition of the daily *Página 12*, the head of that entity, Arnal Cirilino, stated that "for now we've cleaned up the system financially . . . but the final stabilization will only be achieved in the year 2020." By then, today's pensioners will be dead.

### 'A damned dwarf'

For the past year, hundreds of retirees have gathered every Wednesday in front of the National Congress to protest this policy of genocide. Carrying drums and a huge crucifix, those people who helped build Argentina as a nation when they were working productively now confront the police with eggs, sticks, and stones. Police have cordoned off the area where the protesters gather to demand passage of legislation which could alleviate their anguished situation.

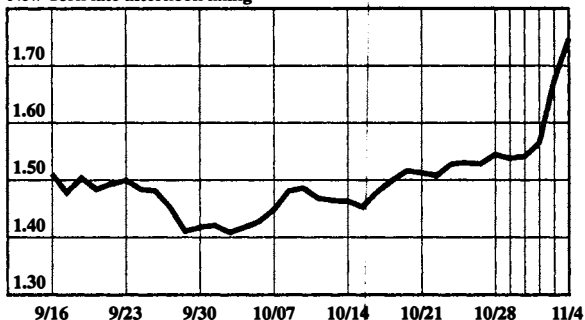
At the last demonstration on Oct. 21, over 3,000 people gathered carrying signs which read "Corrupt Menem, traitor, liar, damned dwarf. . . . Menem you're a traitor, a bastard. . . . No to genocide, we want to live with dignity. . . . Damned egomaniac, you'll never be granted mercy. . . . Caligula's [Menem's] dreams are fulfilled, the retirees are killing themselves."

This demonstration of rage has spurred the government into action, largely due to concern "over the political cost of the critical pensioner situation," according to the Oct. 28 issue of *Clarín*. Menem called an extraordinary cabinet meeting a day earlier in which he demanded "concrete answers" to what he characterized as "the government's greatest concern." However, the only solution presented thus far is the creation of a special secretariat which will deal with the problems of the "Third Age"—pensioners. A decision has been made to grant \$50—a pittance—to the poorest retirees, and pay Bocon bonds to the most elderly. Social Action Minister Julio César Araoz insisted that the President would name a person of "great social sensitivity" to run the agency.

## Currency Rates

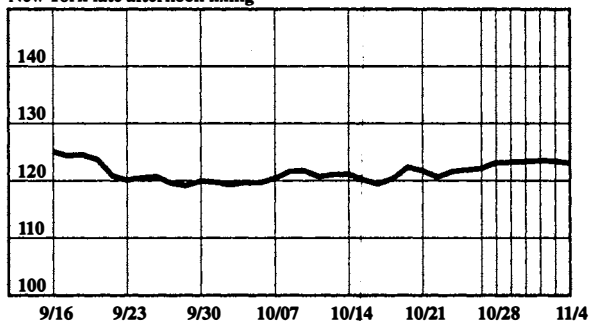
### The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



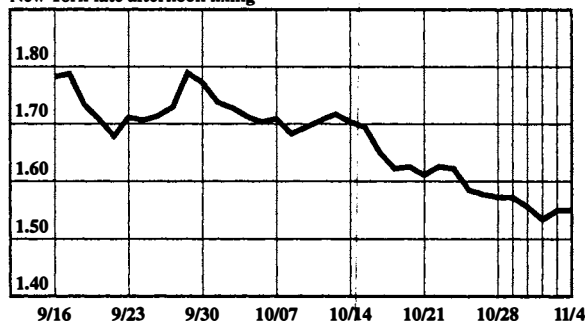
### The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



### The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



### The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

