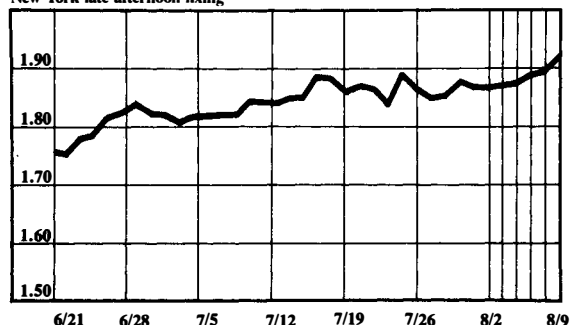


Currency Rates

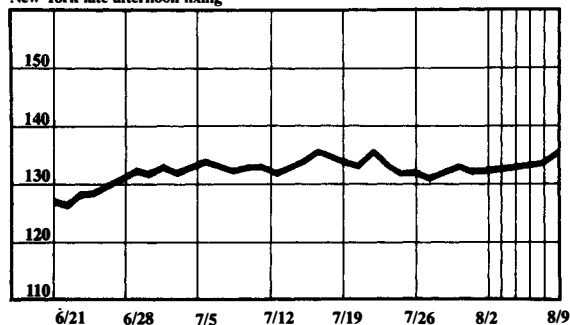
The dollar in deutschmarks

New York late afternoon fixing



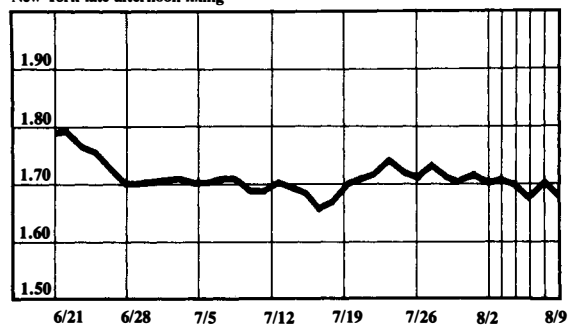
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



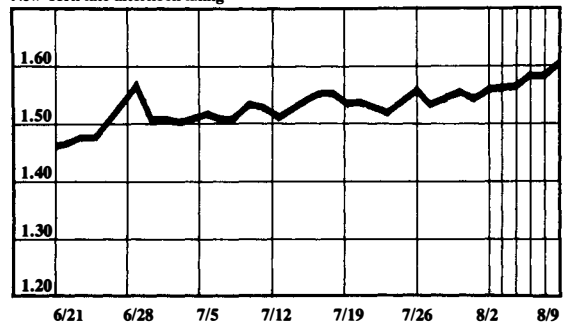
The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



Food crisis was top at Moscow Central

by Luba George

A Soviet agriculture official tried Aug. 3 to encourage a widespread belief, that the U.S.S.R. was headed for a good harvest, without drought-related losses such as were suffered elsewhere in the world. Aleksandr Zholobov, a collegium member of the Soviet State Committee for the Agro-Industrial Complex (Gosagroprom) told the official news agency TASS, "Despite all weather deviations, there was no disaster anywhere."

Perhaps Zholobov was trying to create a smoke screen over the increasingly desperate Soviet and Eastern European demand for food imports. Whatever his motive, the activity of the Soviet leadership and the on-the-scene harvest reports in the Soviet press tell a very different story.

On July 29, the Soviet Communist Party held a Central Committee plenum, to deal with the economic crisis. The top item on the agenda was the Soviet *food* crisis. Half of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov's keynote speech concerned the need to overcome the continuing "acute shortages" of food and consumer goods and "difficulties in agriculture" afflicting the Soviet Union. This was dramatically conveyed by the Soviet media. After singling out shortages in "meat and fresh fruits," at one point in his speech, Gorbachov shouted, "Even in Moscow, where generally almost anything can be purchased—queues of people, everywhere!" According to Radio Moscow on July 30, the plenum adopted "measures," related solely to food, but these were not made public.

Regional agriculture reports, compiled from the Soviet press, indicate that even where there was a potentially good yield per acre this year, huge problems with weather, machinery, and infrastructure would make it impossible to bring in.

In Voronezh Oblast, or region, on the Don, for instance, *Izvestia* reported that "the harvest promised to be excellent, but continuous rains and winds have flattened 200,000 hectares of grain . . . and in eastern regions dry winds have parched the crops." In Lipetsk (south of Moscow) and Tambov (east of Moscow) Oblasts, *Izvestia* added, crops were hit with "continuous rains and winds."

During the month of July, extensive parts of the U.S.S.R. were hit with drought and heat spells, while other areas were devastated with torrential rains, causing damage to winter