

Food dependence

Contrary to Brown's self-serving logic, the causes of today's food shortages are not "inherent difficulties" in expanding food output, nor "population pressure," but rather the takedown of national economies and their output potential under the recent decades of the IMF era. Consider just the crudest measure of this: the degree to which nations were self-sufficient in basic grains output in the 1970s, and how they became food-dependent by 1990.

Western Hemisphere: Mexico was 106% self-sufficient in grains in 1970 (i.e., a grains exporter); and 73% self-sufficient in 1991. Haiti was 94% self-sufficient in 1970; and 46% self-sufficient in 1990.

Africa: Algeria was 76% self-sufficient in 1970; and 44% in 1990. Egypt fell from 73% self-sufficient in 1970, to 63% in 1990.

Middle East: Jordan was 33% self-sufficient in grains in 1970; and as of 1990, only 3%—i.e., almost totally dependent on outside sources.

In the former Soviet bloc region, this process has taken not decades, but only five years. As a whole, the Soviet Union, in 1970, was over 90% self-sufficient in grains output for its needs, though with livestock feeding problems, and other limitations. By the mid-1980s, this self-sufficiency had dropped to 85% at best. From 1990 to the present, the grains output of this region has dropped to the point of catastrophe. For example, the average annual grains harvest in the Russia Federation was between 110-115 million tons in the 1980s. In 1992, it dropped to 101 million tons; in 1993, down to 94 million tons; in 1994, down to 77 million tons.

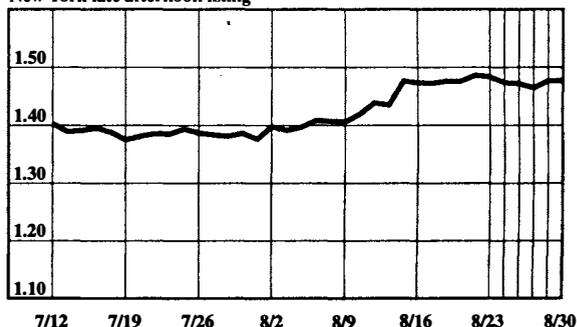
This year, the Russian grain harvest may fall to 65 million tons. The solution for Russia, and all the CIS republics, is the same needed on every continent: To initiate emergency measures for the present, and to restore longer-term infrastructure building, and production of the inputs required to expand agricultural output potential. In the newspaper *Trud* on Aug. 26, commenting on the disastrous grain harvest, Russian Vice Premier A. Zaveryukha and Agriculture Minister A. Nazarchuk both noted that Siberia is potentially capable of feeding the whole of Russia. The problem here, as elsewhere, however, is lack of equipment. "The work load per combine in Altay [south of Novosibirsk] this year is in excess of 500 hectares. That is, crop losses are inevitable."

As against this reality, "The Quebec Declaration" on the FAO's 50th anniversary is just more despicable U.N. doublespeak on food. It notes "with satisfaction the progress made globally with respect to these objectives [ensuring the 1945 goals of freedom from hunger, expanding the world economy and raising nutrition levels] over the past 50 years." The declaration calls for action in three areas: "I. Promoting agriculture, forestry and fisheries as key sectors in the quest for sustainable economic development; II. Empowering food producers and consumers; III. Making sustainable use of natural resources for development."

Currency Rates

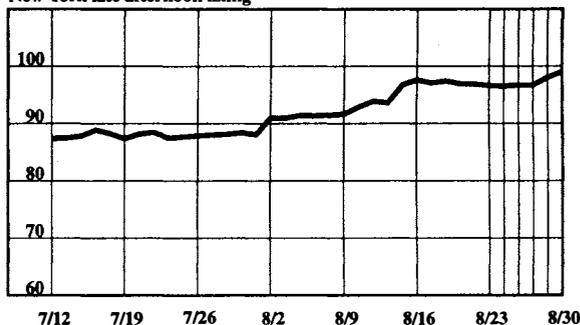
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



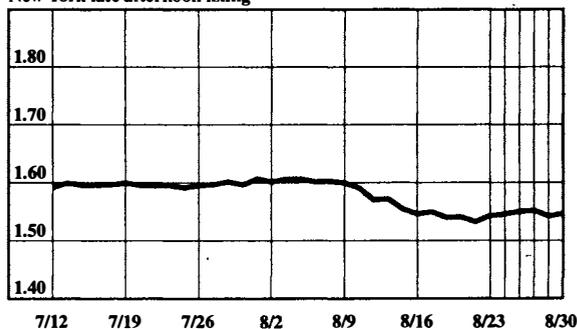
The dollar in yen

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

