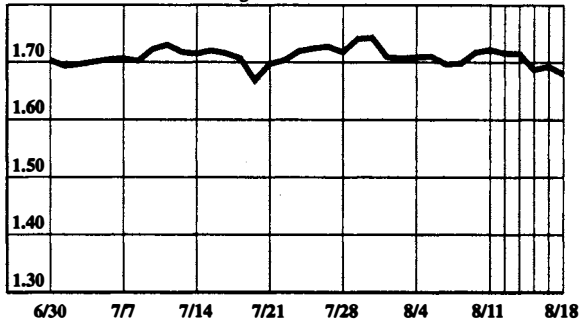


Currency Rates

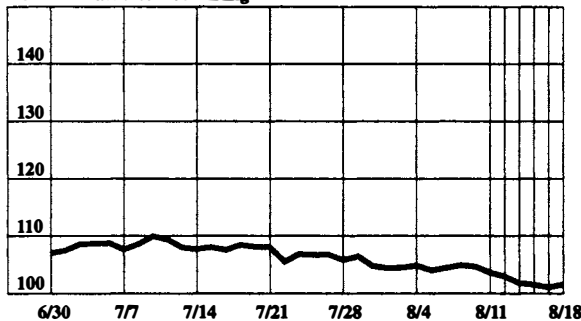
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



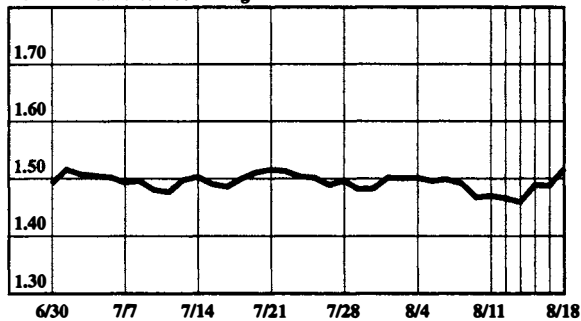
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



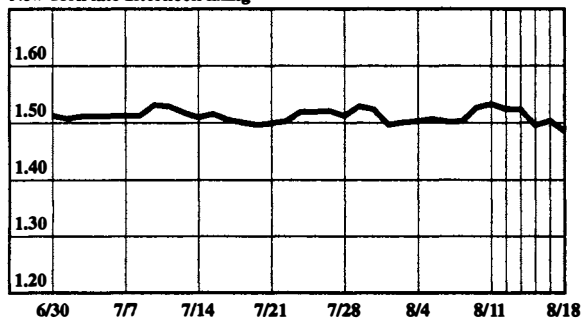
The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



economical” than repairing the roof.

Male and female workers are not merely thoughtlessly exposed to health-endangering substances at the work place. The same substances are discharged into trenches where children play, and from which domestic animals drink. They flow through the rickety shantytowns called *colonias*, then they seep into the ground and poison the drinking water. A random test by General Motors revealed that the amount of xylene in the waste water exceeded the officially determined limit by a factor of 6,000. But nothing was changed. On Dec. 6, 1990, a cloud of poison gas flowed from the ventilation system of the Retzloff chemical plant near Colonia Privada. Fifty people in the neighborhood were poisoned. The flow was stopped only when the poison cloud crossed the border and set off a panic in neighboring Brownsville, Texas.

In Brownsville, three children were born in April 1991 with severe brain malformation. In the past year, 72 such children were born on the other side of the border, 42 in Matamoros alone. Investigations by Mexican authorities showed that the causes for this anencephaly (faulty brain development in the fetus) were the solvents xylene and toluene. These substances are frequently emitted into the air via the factory’s air conditioning ducts, or get into the drinking water via wastewater emissions. The entire region has become a breeding ground for infectious diseases.

In the schools, they kept on finding children with strange, hitherto unrecognized handicaps. Finally, it was discovered that the mothers of these children all worked in the same factory of the Mallory condenser company. But the company had pulled out in the meantime, and demands for compensation came too late.

Living conditions in the *colonias* defy description. Living space is lacking, as are adequate schools. Supplies of water and electricity, garbage disposal, sewerage — all these matter-of-course facilities are hopelessly insufficient. Human beings live there in precisely the same conditions as in the heyday of liberalism in Manchester, England in the 19th century, with hundreds of thousands living in barracks or hovels fashioned out of planks of wood.

Maquiladoras on the German border

Maquiladoras are a monstrous exploitation of human beings. But the yuppies of Dresdner Bank do not see that. “The area bordering the United States has the highest state of development in all Mexico.” And they want to establish something similar on the Polish and Czech borders.

They suspect that trade unions will object, because it will destroy jobs in Germany. But they argue that “we should not overlook the fact that otherwise, labor-intensive assembly may be entirely transferred to developing countries, or will simply be discontinued.” That will continue to happen until the labor and income conditions here have adjusted to those in the low-wage countries. But who, one might ask, will have the money to buy the products once they are produced?