



Half the World

by Claudia Jones

"A RED APPLE FOR TEACHER"—in by-gone days was a favorite way of kids to show appreciation for a beloved instructor. But besides being suspect, because of its color, red apples can be bought more cheaply abroad than at home today. Under the guise of "subsidizing" overseas markets, the Department of Agriculture recently announced that it would pay big producers a subsidy equal to 50 percent of the domestic price of shipping on those fruits sold abroad. This means, of course, wholesale dumping of apples on the Marshall Plan controlled economies of Western Europe. It is significant that while there is an Administration subsidy for monopolies, there is no counterpart in subsidies for impoverished families who can't pay high prices on milk, meat, vegetables and other wholesale groceries.



In fact, as shown in the recent tweedledum-tweedledee State Conventions, there were new efforts to sell short the American consumer. Republicans demagogically called for "economic controls" while Democrats called for "maintaining economic controls." Nowhere do their platforms show their combined responsibility in killing price controls.

As every working class and Negro housewife knows, there are no price controls today. What is more, a full shopping bag is practically beyond reach. This is because husbands' pay checks are shrinking, and slight wage increases, won as a result of the recent strike wave, which scared the bi-partisans stiff, have been accompanied by big business increases of food and other consumer items.

MILK PRICES, FOR EXAMPLE, have been raised one and a half cents a quart by the powerful Sheffield-Borden milk monopolies. This represents the third increase in the price of milk in recent times. With the now unreachable cost of milk which will affect the health of millions of workers kids, is the raise on other food products. The Dun-Bradstreet wholesale food price index for the week of August 30th showed a 12½ percent increase since U. S. intervention in Korea began 12 weeks ago.

Red meat, for example, is reported to be plentiful this fall. But that does not mean it is available for families of basic workers who need protein in their diet to exist on their present wages. For prices will remain high because of the profiteering of the meat trusts operating on the basis of "charging all the traffic will bear."

IT SHOULD BE mentioned also that a big ideological campaign is on in Women's magazines to place the blame for high prices on the "inefficiency" of women's ability to plan. Working women, mind you, who have to pinch and scrape to make ends meet!

It all adds up to a carefully planned "soak the consumer" plan. But consumers are not taking it lying down. They are supporting the program of the Tenants' Council proposals for a "real price roll-back below June 15th levels." It is for this reason, such support went to the New York Tenant and Welfare Consumer Council's recent delegation to Washington on September 18th to see Congress.

These and other actions should be upped. Local delegations should visit community offices of milk and meat companies to protest the projected increase. American women have on more than one occasion used their collective boycott to force prices down and to leave the profiteers to hoard their spoilt "kettles of fish." Let Woman Today hear from women everywhere on how by their actions on high prices they can give leadership on this issue.