

CP--A ROADBLOCK TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The opposition of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment lays bare their total betrayal of the movement for the liberation of women.

The ERA states, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any other state on account of sex."

What is behind the CP's opposition to this amendment? What are the reasons they give?

The CPUSA, in its journal Political Affairs, March, 1976, cites three reasons for their anti-ERA position. The first reason is that "The amendment is a mandate for equality, which...does not define what is needed to achieve full equality in life."

SYSTEM IS CAUSE

At first, this reason gives the impression of being very "left." Of course, any amendment or piece of legislation cannot achieve full equality for women under capitalism. It is the capitalist system itself that is responsible for the oppression of women, and every instance of discrimination towards women can be traced to this vicious system of exploitation and profits.

But the revisionist CPUSA never concedes this fundamental point necessary to a complete understanding of women's oppression and the road to women's liberation.

Genuine Marxist-Leninists fight for passage of the ERA, linking the struggle for reforms to a program of overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism. This is the only road for achieving full equality for women. But the revisionists, in place of combining the fight for the ERA with the fight to overthrow capitalism, offer their "Women's Bill of Rights" as the program for full equality, which is nothing more than a laundry list of partial reforms. It is in this way the revisionists cut out the revolu-

tionary essence of the struggle for women's emancipation and channel it down the road of electoral struggle and reforms.

Another reason the CP gives for their opposition to ERA is "the amendment would wipe out all special protective legislation," and that passage of the amendment would "threaten to prohibit any future legislation" which would "guarantee equality for women." Finally, the CP says the "interpretation as to what does and does not constitute equality will rest with the courts..."

These reasons go even further to expose the revisionists' faith in the capitalist system and their commitment to preserve this system at all costs. Any reform or law that is wrested from the capitalists as a product of revolutionary struggle is bound to be up to the courts to use against the people, since the courts are a direct arm of the capitalists.

Even if the ERA is passed, a struggle will have to be waged to implement it and to defend the gains already won in the area of protective legislation. Even now, working class women must fight a daily battle to maintain the minimal rights already won. But the revisionists bow down before the attacks of the courts and the legislatures, preaching that the working class should shrink back in the face of legal decisions.

The revisionists, just like the capitalists themselves, shake in their boots at the thought of a united struggle of the working class, men and women, all nationalities, against imperialism. The battle for women's equality, one example of which is the current struggle for passage of the ERA, is of great value to the entire working class movement. It has mobilized masses of women and men and raised their political consciousness as to the nature of the inequalities that exist in the country.

The revisionist CPUSA stands opposed to this tremendous movement. Through the course of the struggle, its "communist" mask is being torn off and it is being seen as the 'pro-imperialist party that it is. Even its own ranks are beginning to crack as the party takes increasingly reactionary stands. CP members are finding it increasingly difficult to put forward the party's line within the women's movement. A leading spokeswoman for the party, Bettina Aptheker, has publicly voiced her differences with the CP's line. Many CP members working in the trade unions and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) have remained silent about the party's opposition to the ERA in the face of the overwhelming support among the rank-and-file membership of those groups for the amendment.

KKK, ATTACK

Destrehan, La.—As support continues to build for the upcoming July 17 "Free Gary Tyler" demonstration in New Orleans, the police and KKK have stepped up their repression and harassment of the Tyler family.

On May 17, Gary Tyler's younger brother, Terry, was arrested on a burglary charge. Although Terry had been out of town for two days, he was arrested and charged upon his return to Destrehan.

Police have so far refused to inform the Tyler family of when and where this "burglary" was supposed to have taken place. Terry Tyler is head of the Gary Tyler Freedom Fighters, an all-Black organization of Destrehan high school students active in Gary Tyler's defense. He is currently free on \$5,000 bond.

The weekend after Terry Tyler's