

'If it doesn't pass. . .I'll become more militant'

# After ERA march, sober spirits

By BARBARA ROSS

More than 3000 parched, sunburned New Yorkers tumbled off buses and planes into the hot, smoggy city last night, unsure of what they accomplished yesterday as part of a Washington demonstration by 65,000 in support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Although they were enthusiastic at the rally, afterward they paused for thought about the impact on Congress.

"I don't know," sighed Ronnie Smith, a Manhattanite who works for the state Division on Human Rights. "I'm so discouraged in general about what's happening in my field."

"It doesn't look good, does it?" Karen Blaker, a Tarrytown psychologist, said ruefully.

Indeed, it doesn't.

For two years, the ERA has been stymied, three states short of the 38 it needs for ratification. Chances of passage before the March 22, 1979, deadline seem remote.

Yesterday, with brass bands and purple and gold banners, ERA's supporters urged Congress to pass a bill extending the deadline for another seven years.

Today, they'll lobby in small groups, arguing that



Post photo by Martha Cooper in Washington

Eight-month-old E.R.A. (that's her real name!) McCarthy and mom, Judy, of Phoenix, Ariz., at the D.C. rally. Little E.R.A. was born at the women's conference in Houston last year.

most of the other amendments to the Constitution didn't have to be ratified within the time frame imposed on ERA.

They hope Congress' support of extension would be read as a sign to ERA's foes that "delaying tactics won't work." But the extension bill is still in

the House Judiciary Committee (which votes on it tomorrow), and the chance of passage is said to be 50-50.

"If it doesn't pass, I — I'll become more militant, that's what!" a curly-haired young woman declared, swinging her fist for emphasis, as she board-

ded a bus for the city.

Her attitude was shared by a group of more than 100 women steamfitters from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Led by Claire Moriarity, they had to get a petition circulated in order to persuade the male leaders of the seafarers union to pay for a bus to take them to Washington.





Associated Press Photo

Meanwhile, in Seattle: TV star Valerie Harper, center, marched in ERA rally with her sister, Leah Windward, right, and 2500 others Saturday.

"The men said they'd never get enough to fill a bus (for 50 people), but by the time we finished leafleting, within a half hour, they had enough for two buses and had to turn women away," declared Jo Otero, leader of the Minority Women's Caucus of the city chapter of the National Organization for Women.

Noreen Connelly, chairman of the New York chapter of NOW, marveled at the size of the turnout as she rested against a stone wall, trying not to succumb to the heat.

"We did it all within two months and on a shoestring budget," she said.

"Eat your heart out, Phyllis Schlafly!" said Eleanor Smeal, NOW's president, to ERA's main foe. A counter-demonstration on the other side of town attracted 200.

The crowds of mostly young, white women jumped up and cheered when former Congresswoman Bella Abzug urged President Carter to go on national television and make a major speech about "the human rights of American women" as he has for human rights abroad.