

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

FRANCES M. BEAL

writer, activist, organizer

“To die for the revolution is a one-shot deal; to live for the revolution means taking on the more difficult commitment of changing our day-to-day life patterns.”

Page | 1

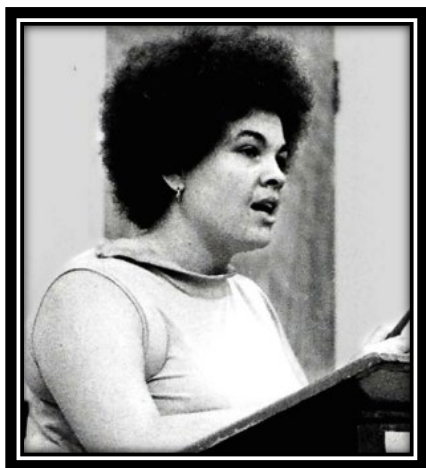


PHOTO BY HOWARD PETRICK

Background Information

Born: January 12, 1940

Frances Beal grew up in Binghamton, New York. Her parents were Black, Native American, and Jewish, which led to Beal experiencing anti-Semitism, racism, and sexism early on.¹

Beal attended the University of Wisconsin and worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Her involvement in SNCC grew from her interest in anti-imperialist politics. Beal's interests were increased after she learned about the effects of colonialism.²

Beal's Resistance

Beal's diverse background and experiences abroad were at the core for her contributions in civil rights advocacy and social politics. In 1968, after refusing to be silenced by SNCC's patriarchal agenda, Beal co-founded the Black Women's Liberation Committee of SNCC. The Committee eventually evolved into the Third World Women's Alliance, an organization focused on advocating for women by analyzing the intersections of race, class and gender. Beal became particularly interested in abortion rights and sterilization abuse, and her writings about reproductive politics made her one of the most powerful black feminist voices.³

Achievements

Beal's essays, *Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female*, and *Slave of a Slave No More: Black Women in Struggle*, encompass her work toward empowering women of color to fight for their rights. These two documents have become crucial pieces of literature in feminist theory and African American history. Once in California in the 1980s, Beal served as associate editor of *The Black Scholar*. Since then she has worked with the National Anti-Racist Organizing Committee and the Racial Justice Project of the ACLU of Northern California. She is the National Secretary of the Black Radical Congress.⁴

¹ Hartmann & Beal. (2015). Frances Beal.

² Hartmann, M. (Interviewer) & Beal, F. (Interviewee). (2015). Frances Beal: A Voice for Peace, Racial Justice and the Rights of Women [Interview transcript]. Retrieved from Street Spirit: <http://www.thestreetspirit.org/frances-beal-a-voice-for-peace-racial-justice-and-the-rights-of-women/>

³ Beal, F. M. & Ross, L. J. (2008). Excerpts from the Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Interview with Frances Beal. *Meridians*, 8(2) 126-165. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40338757>

⁴ Beal & Ross. (2008). Excerpts from the Voices of Feminism Oral History Project.

