



Fondation **Frantz Fanon**

August 2, 2025

MESSAGE CONCERNING THE CANCELLATION OF ROUNDTABLE AT THE CARIBBEAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

On July 20th, 2025, Norman Ajari, one of the Board Members of the Frantz Fanon Foundation shared a message expressing concerns that the Foundation's roundtable entitled "Fanon champ de bataille / Fanon as a battlefield" at the annual meeting of the Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA) had been unilaterally cancelled.

He also shared what the leadership of the organization told the Foundation's Co-Chair Nelson Maldonado-Torres (former CPA President) when he arrived in the morning of July 19th to join the conference proceedings for the day: that not only was the panel cancelled, but also that one of the Foundation's Co-Chairs had been banned from entering the premises of the École Primaire Hanétha Vété-Congolo due to an altercation between one of the Co-Chairs, Mireille Fanon Mendès France, and the main local organizer, Professor Hanétha Vété-Congolo, after the first day plenary organized by the Foundation.

In their response to the roundtable cancellation after various queries by CPA members and former awardees of the CPA's Frantz Fanon Prize, the CPA Executive Board alludes to the "personal conduct of a member of the Foundation's leadership," adding that this alleged behavior "was not well-received by members of the local community." The response also provides an objectionable view of the Foundation as a whole, which is incomplete, inaccurate, and politically problematic. The Foundation believes that there must be better responses to difficult issues and disagreements between organizations, especially in the current context of fascism and multiple genocides. Miscommunications should be addressed with a view to preserve and strengthen anti-colonial and anti-racist ideas and struggles.

The Foundation was proud of the plenary which we managed to put together, one that, as Ajari indicates in his message: "managed to put forward the work of liberation activists from several colonies throughout the Caribbean and the world," and provided a "platform for internationalist connection between eight militant grassroots organisations and the younger generation of intellectuals revolving around the CPA."

The plenary reflected the mission and vision of the Foundation, as well as our dedication to cultivate constructive relationships with grassroots organizers and thinkers across the world. In line with Fanon's own trajectory, for the Foundation, it is precisely in sites of grassroots organizing and related collectives that the most creative and radical decolonial intellectual work takes place.

The form in which the plenary session was handled and the altercation that took place after it concluded raised deep concerns to the Foundation, but the Foundation's board decided that it was important to go ahead with the roundtable even as we no longer felt welcome in the meeting, and even as Prof. Vété-Congolo herself was scheduled to appear as the moderator of the panel. While we feared facing dismissive or aggressive attitudes from the moderator, we thought that, in a professional organization such as the CPA, professionalism would prevail at the end of the day. Alas, we were entirely mistaken.

- We should add that the statement from the CPA Executive Board does not mention the altercation or gives an indication that the Foundation may have a very different account of what took place after our Co-Chair was reprimanded for complaining about the disrespectful and unprofessional handling of our plenary session: a session that was originally assigned to three hours, then to two, then to 2.5, until it was finally introduced when it took place as having no more than 1.5 to 2 hours. Also, some of the time assigned to the plenary was given to another organization without any previous discussion, even as the time for the session had already been significantly cut. This resulted in rushed presentations and no time for discussion with the audience, about which some CPA members complained.

Given the various ways in which the situation could have been handled, for us, the cancellation of the panel and the banning of one of our members was a punitive act meant to humiliate one of our Co-Chairs and the Foundation as a whole in the context of celebrating Fanon's centennial in Martinique. In cancelling the panel and banning one of our members without any discussion or effort to reach an agreement about how to conclude the conference in the most constructive spirit and in the interest of all, the CPA Executive Board reproduced one of the worst aspects of the colonization of knowledge that the organization presumably aims to counter.

The ways in which the CPA leadership chose to approach our plenary session with anti-colonial organizers also demonstrates that one thing is to verbally affirm the value of grassroots decolonial organizing and of the intellectual activities that take place outside of the academy, and another is to actually have the ability to respect, work with, and learn from organizations that prioritize the emergence and cultivation of such thinking-in-action.

We regret choosing the CPA for convening the organizers who joined us, as the CPA's unilateral actions have also impacted them negatively. Since some of them witnessed the altercation that was cited as the reason for the cancellation, we are relieved that at least they know that the CPA's version of the events is wrong, in addition to its actions completely unjustified, particularly in these difficult times. We look forward to continue working with the organizers and activists who joined us in the plenary session and with our other many collaborators and allies in confronting the current international resurgence of fascism and the ongoing genocides in Sudan, Congo, Haiti, and Palestine. We will also seek to organize in the coming months our roundtable discussion "Fanon champ de bataille / Fanon as a battlefield." We will share information through our website.

Executive Board, Frantz Fanon Foundation

