

April 5, 2024

Prof. Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee
Rector of the University of Cologne
Albertus-Magnus-Platz
50923 Cologne
Germany

My dear Rector,

Albertus Magnus would have been appalled!

Your decision to cancel Professor Nancy Fraser's invitation to be the Albertus Magnus Professor at your university because she signed a letter supporting the people of Palestine is simply outrageous.

Academic freedom has been a critical component of great universities. Any assault on academic freedom and free expression will erode any university's mission of creating independent thinkers who can participate fully in the civic life of their countries.

Article 5 of your constitution guarantees freedom of speech, expression and opinion.

In the letter of invitation to Professor Fraser the Chair was described as taking "up...a tradition of great intellectual openness in dealing with the so-called great questions not only in our classrooms, but for a greater audience..."

Professor Nancy Fraser is a world class scholar whose work on social and political theory, feminist theory and contemporary French and German thought is widely recognized and deeply respected.

What is deeply disappointing to us at The New School is that your cancellation of her appointment disrupts our decades-long ties to Germany. As you well know we rescued intellectuals seeking refuge from the Nazis. We continued the body of critical thought that had been wiped out—promoting the remarkable traditions of the German academy.

Your decision to cancel her invitation is insulting to her, to the academy, and to this university. But more importantly it is a challenge to academic freedom that is unacceptable.

I hope that you will reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,



Donna E. Shalala
Interim President