

**Defending Academic Freedom, AAUP-TNS Stands in Solidarity with NYU's AAUP Chapter
October 27, 2020**

The New School Chapter of the American Association of University Professors ([AAUP-TNS](#)) stands in solidarity with New York University's AAUP Chapter in the case of a blatant attack on academic freedom. On 23 October 2020, Zoom unilaterally shut down a webinar hosted by the NYU Chapter of the AAUP and co-sponsored by several NYU departments and institutes. The webinar was scheduled to discuss the censorship, by Zoom and other big tech platforms, of an open classroom session last month at San Francisco State University, featuring the Palestinian rights advocate Leila Khaled. The event was co-sponsored by the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, the Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, and the Gallatin Human Rights Initiative.

AAUP-TNS condemns the actions of Zoom—a private third-party vendor hired by universities across the United States to assist with efforts to deliver online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic—to shut down the event without any authorization to do so. We support [NYU-AAUP's position](#) on this matter, which importantly reminds us that “The shutdown of a campus event hosted on an NYU Zoom account is a clear violation of the principle of academic freedom that universities such as NYU have historically strongly supported. Allowing Zoom to override this bedrock principle, at the behest of organized, politically motivated groups, is a grave error for any university administration to make, and it should not either escape censure or be allowed to become a new norm regulating online campus life.”

The New School has a long history of defending academic freedom and AAUP-TNS stands with NYU's AAUP Chapter in seeking clarification and answers from university leadership at our respective institutions. We ask that the President's Leadership Team at The New School also hold Zoom accountable for these actions and make it clear that such unilateral intervention by Zoom would be deemed as an act of censorship—grossly unacceptable and in direct violation of a commitment to academic and intellectual freedom, values that The New School has long upheld.