

FAR AWAY BUT NEAR

Idan Lando is not alone. In North Carolina they also don't want to hear all views.

by Nirit Ben-Ari

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In the fall of 2007 Terri Ginsberg arrived at the University of North Carolina as a visiting professor. The department told her that by the end of the year there would be a job opening, and, if interested, she could be a leading candidate. During the first semester Dr. Ginsberg, author of the book *Holocaust Films: The Political Aesthetics of Ideology* (published by Cambridge Scholars), helped curate a film festival on campus. Among other films, *Ticket to Jerusalem*, by the Palestinian director Rashid Masharawi, was screened. Ginsberg told the audience about Masharawi's background, thanked them for coming, and said that by showing up they demonstrated support for Palestinian cultural perspectives, especially those which promote Palestinian liberation. To her great shock, after the screening she was invited to a clarification meeting, and after a short time was told that she was no longer a candidate.

Dr. Ginsberg sued the university for denying her right to free expression and equal protection, but the court accepted the university's claim that there was no connection between the speech and the sudden decision to cancel her candidacy. The court was convinced that the reason was relevant: the position required a specialization in European cinema, but Dr. Ginsberg had switched to studying Middle East cinema. Dr. Ginsberg claimed in response that, before the speech, the university was quite excited about her academic publications, which included articles, four books and a thesis, many of them dealing with German cinema.

Ginsberg appealed to the Court of Appeals, but the appeal was rejected a week ago. This week she told *Ha'aretz*: "I plan to appeal to the Supreme Court of North Carolina in order to prove that the university rejected my candidacy because of my solidarity with the Palestinian people."

(Idan Lando is a professor at Ben-Gurion University. A few months ago he was called up to do his military reserve duty. He refused to serve and spent two weeks in military prison. The University then docked him two weeks pay.)