Protesters Shut Down Screenings of “AIDS Denialist” Films

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A radical activist center in New York City abruptly nixed the screenings of two films scheduled for an event called Rethinking AIDS, which hoped to bring light to voices that have been stifled. The last-minute cancellation was the result of protests and community outrage, reports DNAinfo.

Why the outrage?

Bluestockings Bookstore bills itself as “a 100% volunteer-powered and collectively-owned radical bookstore, fair trade cafe and activist center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan,” so one would imagine that controversial topics abound during its daily schedule of workshops, readings, films and other events.

Nonetheless, this one Facebook comment to Bluestockings summed up the controversy: “WHY ARE YOU HOSTING AN AIDS DENIALIST EVENT TOMORROW? Have you seriously lost your f---ing minds?”

The two films in question are Positively False: Birth of a Heresy and Positive Hell. The first questions whether HIV causes AIDS, and the other goes on to suggest that people living with HIV should not take antiretroviral meds.

A Bluestockings rep told DNAinfo that the store had “never had such a mass movement of anger about an event” and that it canceled the screenings out of fear for employees’ safety. The newspaper reports that the bookstore had misunderstood the intent of the movies and does not support the movies’ ideas.

Filmmaker Joan Shenton claimed the bookstore had plenty of time to preview the content of the films and should not have canceled at such a late date.

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