

Inside look at Jeffrey Smith's anti-GMO event

A small group of Centre For Inquiry members and University of British Columbia Okanagan professors were in the Okanagan College theatre lobby handing out information sheets on the science of genetically modified organisms. Blythe Nilson, assistant professor of biology at UBC Okanagan and author of this story, was among them.

The speaker for the evening was Jeffrey Smith, a well-known anti-GMO activist who has zero scientific credentials, though you might recognize him as a practitioner of yogic flying and member of the Natural Law Party. We talked to people as they came in and were energetic but polite. After a few minutes, the organizers approached and accused us of being disruptive, disrespectful and of having removed one of their posters. Their rather scary leader raised her voice, told us we were trespassing and threatened to call security, causing quite a commotion.

Interestingly, some of the attendees told me they “didn’t believe in science,” yet they applauded his many references to scientists and scientific studies, warped though they were. Science, it seems, is trustable only when it bolsters your previously held beliefs. One person announced she “had already decided what to believe” and “didn’t want to hear” about evidence that contradicted her choice.

I have never witnessed such a public display of incivility in my life. The atmosphere was cult-like in that anything but the party line was absolutely not tolerated, and the leaders made every effort to keep us and our contradictory point of view suppressed. Comments made by us on their online forums are deleted immediately, as if their members are not able to think for themselves.

Only confirmation is allowed.

Read the full, original article: [Dissent is not permitted: a look inside Kelowna's anti-GMO cult](#)