A Radical Voice Worth Reading

August 11, 2015 By Trent Straube

Journalist Doug Ireland's career spanned the AIDS epidemic and the gay rights movement. He died in 2013, but over 30 years of his writings are now collected in *The Emperor Has No Clothes: The Radical Voice of Doug Ireland*. Why radical? He was openly gay, a leftist and a militant atheist (the result of contracting polio as a child after his Christian Scientist parents refused to have him inoculated). In the '60s and '70s, Ireland worked for labor groups and for politicians such as Bella Abzug, an outspoken progressive. He befriended the likes of Christopher Hitchens, Susan Sontag and Martin Duberman (who wrote the book's introduction), and Ireland lost his beloved partner, Hervé Couergou, to AIDS. In other words, Ireland was a reporter of considerable intelligence and political insight, unafraid to voice his opinions on everything from U.S. presidents to sexual politics, as in these two articles that first appeared in the pages of POZ: "Hate Thy Neighbor: The Christian Right" and "Don't Regulate My Body: Closing the Bathhouses."

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