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GENITAL POLITICS

***The Politics of Lust*, by John Ince A Radical New Perspective On Sex**

North Americans are sexual wimps. Contrary to the conventional view that our society is sexually sophisticated, most of us are mighty squeamish about sex. Our culture's much touted sexual hedonism is in fact mere bravado.

So argues Vancouver lawyer, erotic arts activist, and sexual theorist John Ince in *The Politics of Lust* (Pivotal Press, 2003, \$24.95 softcover, 335 pages, ISBN 0-9696567-1-8).

Ince shows that though thirty years have elapsed since a supposed "sexual revolution," negative attitudes are still prevalent toward a vast array of sexual issues, including nudity, masturbation, honest sexual dialogue, sex education, sex toys, erotic art, homosexuality, anal sex and more.

The most immediate effect of our sexual prissiness is to render our sex life dull and routine. Compared to our openness to innovation in travel, cuisine, recreation, art, and music, our sex lives remain a stale backwater. We are lousy lovers, uncomfortable with anything new and experimental in the erotic domain.

Our sexual aversion affect more than our erotic lives. It inspires intolerance against gays, sex educators, sex workers, erotic artists, swingers, nudists, or anyone else who challenges the sexual status quo. *The Politics of Lust* exposes the considerable extent of such antisexualism in our laws, religions, schools, corporations, and media.

Ince has first-hand experience with such intolerance. In June Vancouver police threatened to charge him with criminal offences for producing the sexually explicit performance piece *Public Sex, Art and Democracy*.

Ince contends that the most powerful people in society are often the most sexually uptight. The higher the level in the power elite, the greater the punishment for sexual experimentation – just ask Bill Clinton – and that breeds sexual anxieties. Senior politicians and corporate and religious leaders also tend to be "control freaks" who find their own powerful and spontaneous sexual impulses threatening.

Sexual issues ramify beyond the erotic domain, says Ince. He contends that our sexual attitudes and our political orientation are closely related. Sexual anxiety is conducive to pecking order social relationships, in families, religions, and the political system. "The more we fear sex," says Ince, "the greater we favour social inequality. The more sexually relaxed a society, the more democratic it will be."

The Politics of Lust (Pivotal Press, 2003, \$24.95, softcover, 336 pages, ISBN 0-9696567-1-8)

Ince's tour schedule:

Vancouver: Oct 6-10, **Calgary** 12-14, **Toronto** 15-18,

Montreal 19-22, **Ottawa** 23-25, **Winnipeg** 25-27, **Edmonton** 28-30

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