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## **Why We Write About Gay Liberation**

Since we started putting out *Chutzpah* we have received favorable response. However, many people feel uneasy about our articles on homosexuality. They wonder what this stuff is doing in a Jewish paper. They don't see a relationship between this issue and other things we talk about, and feel the paper makes a lot of sense except for these few "weird articles." Let us therefore explain why we think it is important for *Chutzpah* to discuss homosexuality and the Gay Liberation Movement.

*Chutzpah* is for Jews. Some Jews are gay. They feel excluded by American culture both for being Jewish and for being gay. Homosexuality is illegal in every state except Illinois, and most states have laws against "sex psychopaths" which permit homosexuals to be involuntarily committed to mental hospitals. Open homosexuals face blatant job discrimination. In child custody cases where lesbianism is an issue, openly gay mothers usually lose custody of their children.

Gay Jews are also excluded by their own people. Jews who are homosexual are not allowed to obtain Israeli citizenship under the Israeli law of return and Jewish law prohibits male homosexuality. Many gay people in Jewish organizations have described to us the pain and fear of hiding what they are, and they are glad that *Chutzpah* has begun to discuss problems that gay Jews face within their own community.

Why is homosexuality such a scary issue? Why have so many people told us that this is an issue better left untouched? Well, first of all, sexuality in general has been a problem for many of us. It's hard not to have ambivalent feelings about sex.

Both American and Jewish culture have very rigid rules about what is acceptable behavior for women and men in male-female relationships, relationships between women, and relationships between men. Often, these roles have nothing to do with who we are, what we want, or what we are feeling.

The Gay Liberation Movement militantly demands the right to openly express sexuality, the right to have sex with whomever you like, the right to sexual being, the right of men to love men and women to love women, the right to have sex for pleasure. Since many of us feel that we don't have the right to even think about sex and are "bad" if we do, homosexuality confronts some of our deepest fears. Through open discussion of sexuality in *Chutzpah* we can help to ease this anxiety. We believe this discussion is necessary for us to build a cooperative, non-authoritarian community where men and women will be free to be themselves.

In addition, the Gay Liberation Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Jewish Liberation Movement find themselves ostracized by much of the Left. Homosexuality is stigmatized as "bourgeois capitalist decadence," feminism as "detracting from the struggle against class oppression," and Jewish consciousness as "imperialist Zionist racism." We are victims of the dogma that some struggles (Third World) are legitimate while others (ours) are not. Militant Gays, Feminists, and Jews have rejected this ideology and have recognized that freedom means struggling against our *own* oppression as well as supporting others' struggles.

Thus, we are natural allies. *Chutzpah* will continue to strongly support liberation struggles, including Gay Liberation and Women's Liberation.