

New Year's Greetings, 5732

MAX M. FISHER

(Chairman, Board of Governors, Jewish Agency For Israel and Chairman, United Israel Appeal, Inc.)

American Jewry can face the year 5732 with feelings of both pride and concern.

Our concern, of course, is for the fact that peace, real peace, has not yet arrived for Israel and its people. In the next twelve months it must be the responsibility of all of us to work toward the day of peace, making certain that

there is no lack of humanitarian help for the immigrants who are still coming into Israel in large numbers, and no fall-off in the vital social and related aid required by many thousands of still unabsorbed earlier immigrants and their children.

Nonetheless, American Jews may be proud of what we accomplished in the year just passed, because we achieved much.

First, we provided a record sum for meeting human needs in Israel and overseas, and for Jewish needs on the domestic scene. We did not do all that we wanted to do - but that we did as much as we did, in a time of economic difficulties, speaks inspiring volumes for the capacity of American Jews to understand their responsibilities, and to respond accordingly.

American Jews shared in other notable gains. High on the list is the fact that we bring to fruition the long-planned reconstitution of the Jewish Agency for Israel. This was accomplished last June in Jerusalem, at the World Assembly for the Reconstitution of the Jewish Agency. That event will, I am convinced, mark the beginning of a new and creative partnership between those who led the Jewish Agency until recently, and the representatives of American and other free world Jewish communities. Now, we share fully with the traditional leaders of the Agency, in making the basic -- and often hard -- decisions on how the monies we provide for humanitarian work in Israel can best be utilized.

I foresee, as a result of this partnership, that the year 5732 will provide the beginnings of several new and exciting efforts to ease some of Israel's most pressing human problems.

There were other advances in the past year, especially on the domestic front. A worthwhile beginning was made by many communities in facing up to the growing problem of providing sound Jewish education for our young people at many levels. Additionally, real strides forward were made in dealing with the related problems of deepening the ties between American Jewish youth, especially at college level, and the organized Jewish community.

American Jews did their share, as well, in keeping world attention focused on the

plight of Soviet Jewry. And here at home, they made further progress in meeting some of the pressing social commitments that cluster around the great problems of our time, known collectively as the "urban crisis."

All in all then, the year concluded was one of positive accomplishment for American Jews. But the year 5732 will offer problems every bit as difficult and as challenging. However, we have demonstrated that we have the community, the leadership, the resources and the will to meet them. It is my earnest hope, as I extend my best wishes for a most Happy New Year to my fellow Jews everywhere, that a year from now American Jews will be able to say that we have made still greater progress in promoting Jewish well-being at home, abroad and in Israel.

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