

# Jews By Choice

BY RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

Ever hear of Jews by Choice? I hadn't til I read an article in the Los Angeles Times.

The article describes the activities and beliefs of dozens of men and women, originally non - Jewish, who have opted for Judaism.

As often happens, the converts have gone Jewish because they married Jews and decided that a family is more stable if it contains just one faith.

The converts have become more zealous than some born Jews, we learn from the article by Mary Louise Oates.

Jews by Choice is sponsored by three Jewish organizations: the Federation, University of Judaism (Conservative), and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform).

Lydia Kukoff, the group's chairman, is the offspring of a Catholic and a Baptist. She married a Jew and now guides other converts in the observance of Jewish holidays.

Other members of the group are former Catholics and Protestants. One is an ex-Mormon. One comes from Cuba.

Jews by Choice estimates that each year about 500 people turn Jewish in the L.A. area. Most have converted because they have embraced Jews; a few have decided just to embrace Judaism.

The L.A. movement is part of a nationwide influx into the Jewish faith by gentiles who have become enchanted with "the mother faith."

Every synagogue in the country, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, and every Jewish organization has been enriched by the devotion of these new Jews.

The massive surge, involving hundreds of thousands might be described as "The Greatest Story Never Told," and it's all the more remarkable considering that Jews don't missionize.

## SCHMIDT RULES OUT VISIT TO ISRAEL

BONN (WNS) -- Although Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is reportedly eager to visit Israel he will only do so if the political situation in Israel changes, it was reported here. This has been taken to mean that Schmidt will not visit the country while Menachem Begin is Premier. There has been a standing invitation to the Chancellor for six years.

This attitude was indicated in statements Schmidt recently made in two separate conversations with former Defense Minister Ezer Weitzman of Israel and Israel's Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres.

During those conversations, Schmidt reportedly made clear his good will toward Israel and drew a distinction between that country and Begin personally. Another show of good will by Schmidt towards Israel was indicated in a meeting with the new Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Ben Ari.

The Chancellor conferred with the envoy for more than an hour

while many other guests, including numbers of Ambassadors, cooled their heels waiting to meet with Schmidt.

# "REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST..."

## SHAAREI TEFILLA



Jerusalem...Mrs. R. Rivlin, matriarch of one of the Holy City's pioneer families, is subject of prize-winning photo by Aida Polar, Venezuelan immigrant who is a photography student at the Hadassah Community College here. The Hazel Greenwald Berkowitz Award is named for the late Hadassah board member whose photo and film records of the history of Hadassah and Youth Aliyah are in the Zionist Archives.

SHAAREI TEFILLA, the new Orthodox Synagogue of Las Vegas, will be holding High Holiday services starting with evening Rosh Hashanah services on September 28.

Cantor Harold Walt of Los Angeles will chant the liturgy in the traditional Orthodox manner.

Yiskor services on Yom Kippur day, October 8, will be held after the reading of the Torah at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Advance seat reservations are necessary and can be obtained by calling the Synagogue at 734-9540.

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