

### Mitterrand Trip To Syria Is Assailed In Paris

PARIS (WNS) — President Francois Mitterrand's two-day State visit to Syria appears to have been an exercise in appeasement that failed to resolve the sharp policy differences between France and Syria or to budge President Hafez Assad from his hardline position in the Middle East conflict.

Mitterrand, who returned to Paris "went out of his way," according to many observers, to avoid anything that could be considered "a provocation" to the Syrians. French officials said he believed this was the best way to induce Assad to join the peace process and to improve relations between the two countries.

At a press conference in Damascus before his departure, Mitterrand hailed Assad as "a key personality" in the Middle East and exonerated Syria from any role in a

series of terrorist attacks that have taken many French lives in recent months. Assad denied any involvement in the attacks and "I see no reason why I should doubt his words," Mitterrand said.

But Syria stands accused by several French ministers and senior officials and by virtually the entire media of having planned and probably carried out the assassination of the French Ambassador in Beirut in 1981; of

suicide attack on French headquarters in Beirut in October, 1982 in which 58 French paratroopers were killed; and having carried out the attack on an anti-Syrian Arab newspaper in Paris which led to the expulsion of two Syrian diplomats from France.

It is not known whether Mitterrand met with members of the Syrian Jewish community while in Damas-

cus or whether he raised with Assad the issue of Syrian Jews. Before his departure for Syria, the French President promised Theo

Klein, president of the Representative Council of Major French Jewish Organizations (CRIF), that he would do so if the opportunity arose.

Before leaving Damascus, Mitterrand did visit the "Jewish Hall" in the Syrian National Museum and an old synagogue which was reconstructed as an architectural treasurer.

### Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Gets \$1 Million Challenge Grant

PHILADELPHIA — (WNS) — The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College here has received a \$1 million challenge grant from Marjorie and Aaron Ziegelman of New York, it was announced by college president Ira Silverman at a commemoration at the college in honor of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan,

the founder and leader of Reconstructionism. The grant was made in memory of Kaplan.

The gift, when matched by other donors, will create an endowment fund which will insure the financial stability of the 16-year-old college, Silverman said. It will create an inviolable account which will earn annual income for the

college's operating expenses.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, which trains both men and women, offers an innovative program which includes

preparation for the rabinate "through courses in personal skills, dynamism and an outlook concerned with the continuing renewal of American Judaism."

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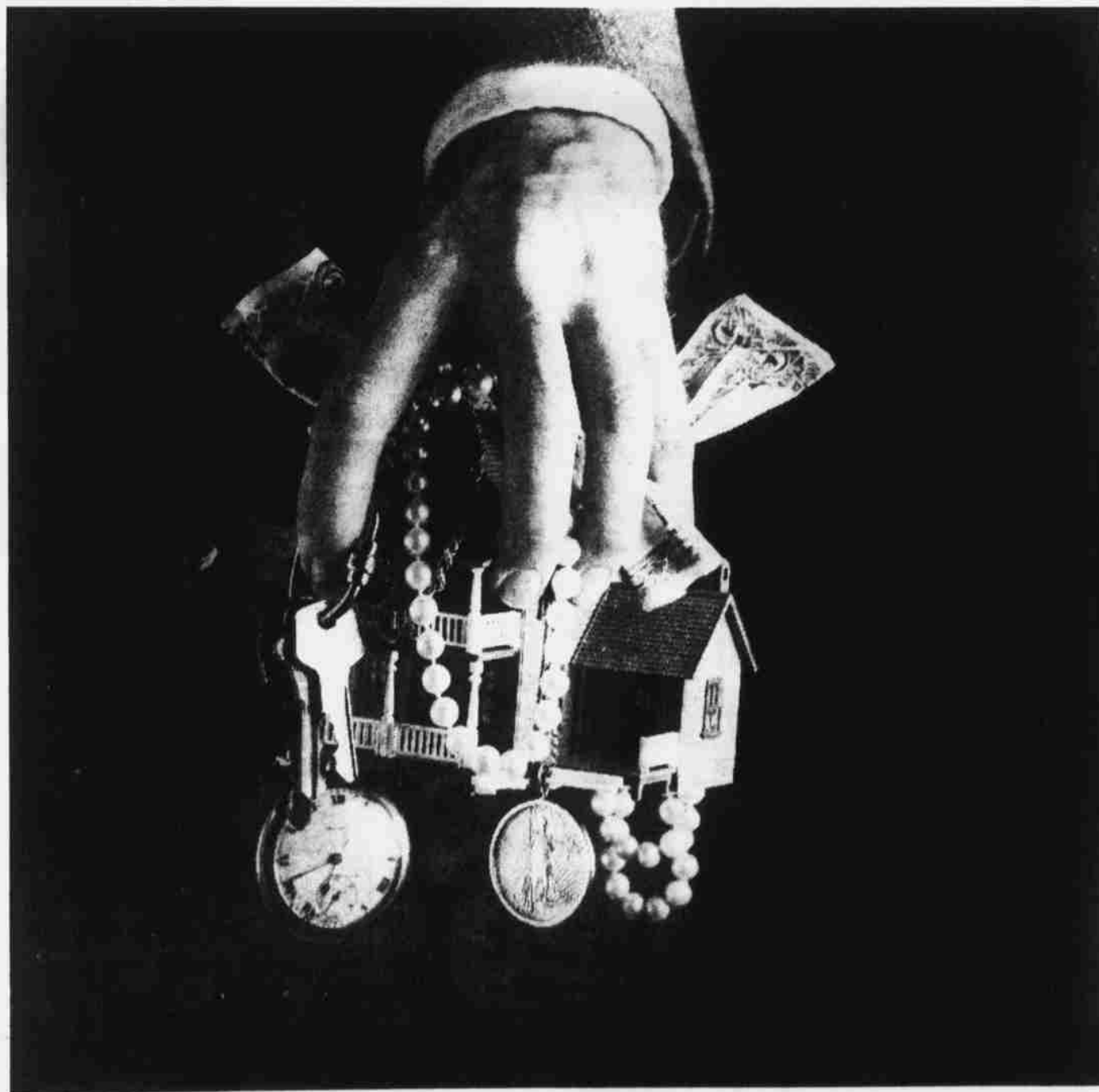
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