

ROTHSCHILD SEEKS AID OF U.S. RABBIS

French Jews Need Trained Leaders, He Says Here

By JOHN LEO

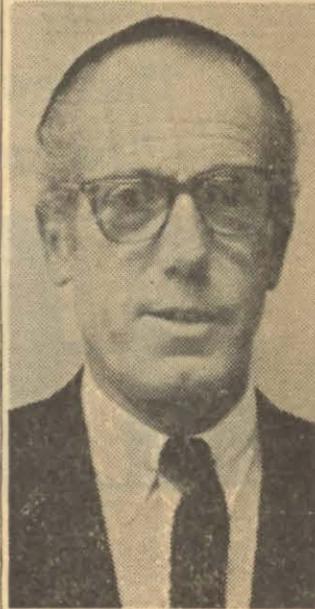
Baron Alain de Rothschild, head of the French Jewish community, is in New York seeking "a kind of lend-lease of American rabbis"—aid from United States Jews in training rabbis and youth leaders for France's rapidly expanding Jewish population.

The 57-year-old banker arrived here late Monday for a 10-day visit, his first trip here for a solely religious purpose.

Rabbi Joseph Karasick, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, which is sponsoring the baron's visit, said: "We will give him all the help we know how to give."

He said plans for graduate training in America of French rabbis and lay leaders as well as prospects for American rabbis to serve in France, would be discussed during the Baron's consultations with Jewish leaders here and in Boston.

In an interview this week, the Baron de Rothschild said that French Jews faced severe problems in coping with rapid expansion. The community has



The New York Times

SEEKS AID FOR JEWS: Baron Alain de Rothschild at an interview held here.

tripled in size to 500,000 in the last decade.

"Now that we are reaching

the adult stage," the Baron said, "it seems silly not to get in contact with the largest Jewish community in the West, which is American. We want to make use of American know-how in solving our problems."

The most severe problems, he said, are a shortage of rabbis and lay leaders, and the anti-religious temper of the French people.

"Here in the United States," he declared, "if you are not religiously affiliated, people look at you oddly. In France, on the contrary, the religious person is the oddity. In this atmosphere, it is very difficult to pass on a religious heritage."

"The question is: Can Judaism survive? The only way it can is by its spirituality. There is no other way. If we pass on only the cultural heritage, it will surely be gone in a generation or two. And we cannot afford to make the reaction to anti-Semitism the rallying point because this implies that anti-Semitism is necessary to keep the tradition going."

The Baron, who succeeded his cousin, Guy, 10 years ago as president of the Consistoire

Central Israelite de France et d'Algerie — the religious and social organization of French and Algerian Jews — said he wanted American help in making French Jewish leaders more active in civic affairs.

"American Jews are not isolated in the synagogue," he said. "They are tremendously active in combating poverty and housing problems. We very much admire this and would like your help in training such leaders in France."

The Consistoire, he said, has sponsored a rapid building program to serve its growing constituency, with a synagogue or Jewish center already built in 32 of the new towns that have mushroomed around Paris.

The Baron conferred yesterday with leaders of the Orthodox union and attended a dinner in his honor at Yeshiva University. Rabbi Bernard Twersky, the union's press officer, said the Baron would meet the presidents of the major American Jewish organizations and make a one-day trip to Boston Sunday for a dinner at Maimonides School and a talk with Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, a Talmudic scholar.

4