





The War Refugee Board: War Department Memo on Cooperation in Rescue of Jews

(January 28, 1944)

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Following the creation of the [War Refugee Board](#), Secretary of Treasury [Henry L. Morgenthau, Jr.](#) sent [letters](#) to government departments and senior military commanders to establish a working relationship. However, neither the State Department nor the War Department were interested in promoting WRB's activities, nor in allowing any hint of WRB encroachment on their prerogatives. This memo by Major General Joseph T. McNarney to Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy reflects the War Department's reticence to cooperate. It also reflects the armed forces' conviction that the best way to rescue civilian victims was through a speedy Allied victory.

OPD 334.8 War Refugee Bd (28 Jan 44) [Received on 4 Feb 1944 ?]

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR:

Subject: Creation of War Refugee Board for Rescue and Relief of Victims of Enemy Persecutions.

With reference to Secretary Morgenthau's letter of January 28, 1944, in which he suggested that the instructions be sent to appropriate theater commanders concerning the creation and responsibilities of the War Refugee Board, I am sure you agree with me that the War Department is at present doing everything within its powers to rescue and relieve not only the Jews of Europe, but all other victims of enemy persecution. Plans have been and are being formulated for the relief and rehabilitation of liberated territories during the period of military control.

We must constantly bear in mind, however, that the most effective relief which can be given victims of enemy persecution is to insure the speedy defeat of the Axis. For this reason I share your concern over further involvement of the War Department, while the war is on, in matters such as the one brought by Secretary Morgenthau.

In as much as instructions to theater commanders can be given only by the Combined Chiefs' of Staff, I am taking the necessary action to present Secretary Morgenthau's proposal for consideration by the Combined Chiefs' of Staff. I will inform you regarding their action in this matter.

Attached hereto is a proposed reply to Secretary Morgenthau's letter prepared for your signature.

JOSEPH T. McNARNEY,
Lt. General, U.S. Army
Deputy Chief of Staff.

1 Incl: Draft reply.

Sources: [Yad Vashem](#)



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