On diplomats during the Holocaust: the case of the Romanian Constantin Karadja

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At the end of 1942, almost all European countries were occupied by the Nazis, supported the Nazis, or stayed neutral; only the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and Iceland fought among the Allied Powers. Romania was a German ally and therefore has difficulties in coping with its role during the Second World War. The complex history of the country also shows that antisemitism was paramount before and during the wartimes. All the more remarkable that a senior official of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively opposed to the pro-German and antissemitic policies of his own government and thus saved thousands of Jews.

The Holocaust

Beyond any doubt the Second World War was the most gruesome low point of human civilization. Never before have people been killed on such a scale, and part of them because of who they were. Never before have citizens on both sides been seen as important targets for mass killings, like bombardments. The deaths were the result of industrialized ethnic extermination of Jews, Roma, Sinti, and Slavic people; other causes of death were forced labor, direct acts of war and military operations, exploitation, forced migration, hunger and malnutrition, and state-organized terror against resistance fighters, political opponents, prisoners of war, homosexuals and Jehova witnesses. Even a new generation of weapons of mass destruction was required to end the war with Japan. Shaken confidence and fear of repetition, mainly caused by the weak international cooperation at the time, led to post-war decolonization and the creation of international institutions like the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Union. In short, the Second World War has touched upon everyone, has set the new world order and remains the basis for a society of peace, security and human dignity.

The events between 1939 and 1945 are linked inextricably to the decades that preceded it. That epoch was marked by many international tensions and regional wars, such as the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878), the two conflicts in the Balkans (1912 and 1913), the two Chinese-Japanese wars (1894-1895, 1937-1945), the First World War (1914-1918), the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and the Soviet-Finnish winter war (1939-40). All these military conflicts have contributed to, or cumulated in, the Second World War. Growing nationalism and racism in Europe and Asia, aggressive foreign policies, German annexation of adjacent areas, social unrest and extreme poverty, and the economic crisis in Germany eventually led to the biggest war ever, with an estimated number of casualties of 50 to 85 million worldwide.

The Holocaust or Shoah is an integral part of the Second World War. Seven specialized extermination camps were established by the Nazis to annihilate Jews, Roma, Sinti, and Slavs: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Maly Trostenets, Sobibor and Treblinka. These camps were part of a huge system of places, more than 42,000 in total, where people were brought together under military compulsion and where millions of people died under appalling conditions. The Holocaust counts six million mortal victims, of which two million were not killed in gas chambers, but in mass shootings. The Holocaust was the most effective genocide ever and directed against the foundations of Western humanist civilization: unique because it was purely driven by ideology, and unique because of its
incredible size and state-imposed industrialized destruction of fellow humans.

**Resistance**

In these anxious times of Nazi suppression, some showed courage notwithstanding the constant threat of violent punishment. Forms of resistance arose in the occupied regions. Among Jews armed resistance saw light: Mordechai Anielewicz and Marek Edelman led the uprising of 1943 in the Warsaw ghetto. Together with his army of partisans Tuvia Bielski was able to hide 1200 Jewish refugees from the Nazis successfully in the Belarus forests. Jewish militias were formed, some of them in uniform, such as near the Lithuanian Vilnius. In Auschwitz and Treblinka unsuccessful revolts took place, but the outbreak of the Sobibor uprising in October 1943 led to the closure of the camp. Jewish volunteers were parachuted into occupied territory to organize resistance, such as Hannah Szenes. Under General Wladyslaw Anders over one hundred thousand Polish soldiers and civilians, including many Jews as Menachem Begin, marched in 1942 under terrible conditions from Siberian Tashkent to Palestine; having arrived there, many joined the Allied armies.

Despite their own nationality others got involved in resistance against Nazi rule too. Examples are the German students Sophie and Hans Scholl, the theologian Dietrich Bonhöffer, the army officers Claus von Stauffenberg and Hans Oster, the head of the Abwehr Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, and possibly Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

A few managed as alleged Nazis to save Jews from a certain death, such as the Sudeten German businessman Oskar Schindler who successfully dragged 1200 Jews through the war as indispensable workers. Using his status Albert Göring (indeed, brother of) saved several Jews and dissidents. The head of the registration of Jews in the Netherlands, Hans-Georg Calmeyer, approved 3700 official complaints, consciously preventing people to be sent to extermination camps. The German captain of the Wehrmacht Wilm Hosenfeld suffered until his death in 1952 in Russian captivity near Stalingrad, having saved a number of Polish Jews, such as the radio pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman. Having witnessed the gassing of Jews in Belzec, the pious SS-doctor and engineer Kurt Gerstein repeatedly tried to warn the Allied forces about the Holocaust from as early as 1942.

Some heads of state also opposed successfully. The Moroccan sultan Mohammed V refused to implement the racial laws imposed by Vichy France and ignored the demanded extradition of Jews to the extermination camps. The Bulgarian King Boris III, having joined the Nazi's in March 1941, refused to impose anti-Jewish measures and to send army divisions to the Eastern Front. During a lunch with a furious Hitler Boris persisted that Jews were indispensable to the construction of internal roads and railways. Shortly afterwards Boris died unexpectedly, probably due to poisoning. Many military commanders and police officers in Italy refused to persecute and extradite Jews, and the Finnish government did so too.

**Diplomats in wartime**

Diplomats had the professional contacts and sometimes the resources to help persecuted people and refugees; in any case, they had access to much-needed travel documents. In July 1938 the international conference in Evian took place, intended to discuss the European refugee problem, to encourage the emigration of Jews and to establish an international organization. It soon became clear that the countries present were not prepared to increase immigration quotas, referring to the high unemployment figures in their own countries; only the Dominican Republic declared to accept them, while claiming remuneration in return.
Against this background, some diplomats in the years that followed refused to provide assistance to Jewish refugees, but others did it anyway.

The American Hiram Bingham IV, son of the explorer and scientist who stood model for Indiana Jones, worked as vice-consul in Marseille closely together with journalist Varian Fry. Bingham issued so-called Nansen passports, designed for stateless persons who could not get any identity document from local authorities. Fry hid the refugees, mostly well-known intellectuals and artists, awaiting for their journey to Portugal or Martinique. The Chinese Consul General in Vienna, Feng Shan Ho, witnessed the desperation among Austrian Jews after the Anschluss and Kristallnacht in 1938. Despite a strict ban he gave hundreds, possibly thousands of visas for Shanghai to Jews, thus enabling the possibility of legalized escape.

Many diplomats from neutral countries did what they could. The biggest orchestrated action to protect Jews took place in Budapest, which was in a spiral of violence against Jews in 1944 and 1945. Eventually, half the Jewish population would survive. The Swiss vice-consul Carl Lutz gave 8,000 letters of protection, proclaimed many houses with refugees under Swiss protection and negotiated directly with Adolf Eichmann. His performance was so openly that the German ambassador in Hungary, Edmund Veesenmayer, asked permission to murder Lutz. Lutz was supported by other diplomats of neutral countries, such as the Portuguese Carlos de Liz-Branquinho Teixeira and Carlos Sampaio Garrido, the Spanish Minister Angel Sanz Briz, the Swiss envoy of the Red Cross Friedrich Born and the Swedish consul Raoul Wallenberg. Wallenberg is almost certainly the most famous diplomat, having handed over tens of thousands of protection letters in Budapest in 1944 and having provided thirty shelter homes to Hungarian Jews. He personally followed a death march to Austria in order to claim as many Jews as possible under Swedish rule. Wallenberg died in Russian captivity, probably in 1947.

As a diplomat of the Vatican City in Bulgaria, Angelo Rotta provided baptismal certificates to Jews. When appointed papal nuncio in Budapest, he protested fiercely to the Hungarian government against the violence against Jews in 1944 and 1945. He also took the initiative to establish the so-called "international ghetto" (where eventually 25,000 Jews would survive the war) and was active in the international Red Cross Committee, established at the initiative of Carl Lutz. Angelo Roncalli did the same in Greece, being an old friend of the Bulgarian King Boris III and former papal nuncio in Sofia (1925-1934), Istanbul (1934-1937) and Athens (1937-1944). He became known in 1958 as pope under the name John XXIII.

The Swiss vice-consul in Bregenz was Ernst Prodolliet, who supplied 300 Austrian Jews with transit visas. He was disciplinarily moved to Amsterdam but continued his assistance to Jews there. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the pious Portuguese consul in Bordeaux, provided - against the explicit orders of his government - more than 1500 Portuguese entry and transit visas to Jews in June 1940. After he was recalled for disciplinary reasons, he passed the consulate in Bayonne, saw groups of desperate refugees at the consulate there too and again - on his own initiative - issued visas.

The Mexican consul in Marseilles Gilberto Bosques rented two chateaux to provide exit visas to nearly 40,000 Jewish and Spanish refugees. Bosques was arrested by the Gestapo in 1944 and exchanged against German prisoners of war. Later he became ambassador in European countries and in Cuba. Jose Castellanos Contreras was Consul General in Geneva in 1942 for El Salvador. He gave thousands of visas, even false ones, thus allowing Jewish refugees to travel to South America. He also issued 13,000 certificates
stating the registered citizenship of El Salvador. The Brazilian Aracy de Carvalho Guimaraes Rosa was employed as diplomatic clerk in Hamburg. From the *Kristallnacht* onwards, she gave thousands of visas to Jews, but without the signature "J", until Brazil joined the Allied Forces in 1942.

Selahattin Ülkümen was Turkish consul in Rhodes. In 1944 he tried to get the 1,700 Greek Jews, gathered for deportation, under the neutral Turkish authority, threatening with an international scandal. He failed, but was successful with the Turkish Jews. In retaliation the Turkish embassy was bombed, killing Ülkümen's pregnant wife.

Even some diplomats belonging to the Axis powers helped Jews. The Christian Chiune Sugihara is the only Japanese who has been acknowledged by Yad Vashem. As consul in Lithuania, he did not wait for the required permission from Tokyo and gave 3,500 transit visas through Russia and Japan to Jewish refugees— even after the official ban. He collaborated with the Dutch consul Jan Zwartendijk, who issued the entry visas for Curaçao without the permission of the governor. The Italian Giorgio Perlasca worked as a meat buyer for the Italian Army on the Eastern Front. He maintained close contact with the Spanish Minister Sanz Briz and appointed himself as his deputy when Sanz Briz was called away from Budapest. It enabled him to smuggle thousands of Jews out of Hungary, on the basis of a law dating from 1924 according to which Spanish citizenship could be granted to Sephardic Jews. Perlasca always stayed silent about his role and was tracked by grateful survivors only in 1987, after years of searching.

**Romania during the Second World War**

Romanian memories of the Second World War are a painful subject. Between 2002 and 2005, a Commission established by President Ion Iliescu, investigated Romania's involvement in the Holocaust. The impetus was the storm of criticism in reaction to the statement by a minister that no Holocaust had taken place on Romanian soil. The chairmanship of the committee was accepted by the Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel. The commission Wiesel came up with a figure of possibly 500,000 victims: between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were killed in Romania and in the territories under Romanian control; in addition, 135,000 Romanian Jews from Hungary and Transylvania (which was controlled by Romania); 5,000 Romanian Jews living outside Romania, and 11,000 Romanian Roma. This was double the number of victims the Romanian Holocaust was previously set at. Thus, the Romanians would have more deaths on their conscience than any other collaborating country, according to the commission.

Romania today is facing this dark period under the Nazi ideology. In Bucharest a multi-day pogrom was organized in January 1941, in which naked Jews were killed in a slaughterhouse. Another example is the infamous pogrom in the eastern town of Iasi: 13,000 Jews were murdered on June 27, 1941, when another group was being driven around in two death trains and dying due to exhaustion, suffocation, dehydration and suicide. Other systematic killings found their way into Bukovina, Odessa, Moldova (then known as Bessarabia) and Transnistria. In August 1941, Hitler praised the Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu for his radical approach. From October 1941 to January 1942 in and around the Ukrainian city of Odessa tens of thousands of Jews and Roma were murdered by Romanian and German troops. In other places the *Einsatzkommandos* were assisted by Romanian units.
Some nationalistic and fascist organizations threw themselves wholeheartedly into the mass murder of Jews, such as the Arrow Cross in Hungary and the Hlinka Guard in Slovakia. Romania had its Iron Guard (Garda de Fier). This movement was founded in 1930 by the German and French-educated antisemite Corneliu Codreanu. Originally named the Legion of the Archangel Michael (Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail), it was a mixture of cultural nationalism, fascism, antisemitism, traditionalism, rejection of modernization and a unique religious orientation. Codreanu went as a prophet on horseback across the country and proclaimed his militant rhetoric. In the turbulent thirties there were major tensions between the charismatic Codreanu and the government around King Carol II. The fact that Codreanu was maltreated during his arrest was answered with the murder of the responsible police prefect, a deed that was not prosecuted. The movement used provoked pogroms and political murders by death squads, called Decemviri and Nicadori. A short-lived reign of the Iron Guard resulted in a violent chaos. In 1938 Carol II took action: Codreanu was sentenced to ten years hard labor and killed during transport to another prison.

Since 1939 Romania was the largest oil supplier to Germany, although the country was officially neutral. On November 23, 1940 it joined the Axis powers. Under dictator Antonescu the Iron Guard, with their new leader Horia Sima, got a second chance. But leather-clad Iron Guardsmen on motorcycles terrorized public life, and especially Jews. Now it was Antonescu’s turn to deal harshly with the rebels in January 1941, with the approval of Hitler - although the Iron Guard flirted openly with Nazi Germany. In return, a thankful Antonescu sent no less than fifteen army divisions to the Eastern Front.

Constantin Karadja
On 24 November 1889 Constantin Jean Lars Anthony Demetrius Karadja (some family members chose for Caradja) was born in an upperclass environment. His father was the Ottoman prince Jean Constantin Alexandre Othon Karadja Pasha, born in 1835, a well-known diplomat, army officer, society figure, but also a virtuoso pianist and composer. His bloodline went back to the Venetian Doge family, the Byzantine nobility and rulers of Wallachia. His military and legal training he had gone through in Athens and Berlin. After embassies in
Berlin, Brussels, The Hague, Turin, Ancona and Brindisi, he became director of the oldest high school in Turkey in 1879, founded in 1481, the Galatasaray Lisesi. Among the students would be formed later one of the leading Turkish football clubs. Karadja could now also carry the Ottoman noble title "Pasha". Although only 46 years old, but after a diplomatic career of 31 years, he was appointed special envoy in The Hague and Stockholm in 1881. He took his temporary residence in Hotel Paulez in The Hague, while looking for a majestic house somewhere in the city.

### Birth certificate of Constantin Karadja (Haags Gemeentearchief)

From the first marriage of Karadja senior with Caroline Durand a daughter was born, but the marriage had ended soon. He remarried in 1887 to Marie Louise Smith, better known as Princess Mary Karadja of Sweden, daughter of the wealthy beverage producer and politician Lars Olsson Smith. From that marriage at 2:30 PM on November 24, 1889 Constantin was born at the address Nassaulaan 1. Karadja senior, "residing in Constantinople", signed birth certificate number 4934 on 26 November in the presence of witness doctor Jan Coert. As profession he mentioned "buitengewoon gezant en gevolmachtigd Minister van Turkije bij het Nederlandsche Hof", to be translated as "special envoy and plenipotentiary Minister of Turkey at the Dutch Royal Court." An older brother of Constantin lived only for ten months, and he had a younger sister by the name of Despina, born in 1892.

Mother Mary Karadja published in 1892 a well-reviewed bundle of 150 pages of philosophical musings in French, such as "God created man and woman, but who created the mother-in-law?", "The god is for the unfortunates, as the medicine is for sick " and "Prejudice is a wall of ice; one must melt it down." The booklet costed 3,50 Dutch florins, which can be regarded as rather expensive at the time. Other books from her hand would follow, such as Spiritistische Phaenomene und Spiritualistische Offenbarungen (1900) and
Sieben Sakramente (not dated). With such a broad international and intellectual background a promising career lay ahead for Prince Constantin Karadja. But he would surpass his colorful father and his sophisticated mother by obtaining fame by his acts during the war in many respects; even more remarkable that he is so unknown still.

According to insurances of real estate Karadja senior was registered at the address Nassaulaan 1. It was the first in a row, right next to the bridge across the canal, at the corner of the Mauritskade. It was built in 1846-47 as ordered by King Willem II, but number 1 was torn down and reconstructed in 1897. The houses were originally meant for cavalry officers...
of the King’s riding school at number 12; in 1863 the stables were renovated to the biggest church in the Netherlands at that time with more than 2,000 seats.

In the newspaper *Nieuws van de Dag* from February 2, 1889 a diplomatic riot was feared because of the stench of the open water in front of the Karadja's place. Karadja senior, also being envoy in Stockholm, went abroad regularly. On February 11, 1890 in the *Leydse Courant* a removal was announced, most likely to the castle of Karadja senior in Bovigny, near Luxembourg; there he died on August 11, 1894 according to his obituary of August 13, 1894 (and not in The Hague, as stated erroneous until now). On April 10, 1890 an advertisement in the *Haagse Courant* announced the disposal of the household effects from Nassaulaan 1: birds, including peacocks (a strange phenomenon for a town house, as these are noisy animals), and a wine collection of some importance. Any connection between the stench and the removal to Bovigny cannot be proven.

After Karadja senior had deceased - Constantin was four years old - his mother returned to Sweden and Constantin went to high school there. For an education based on humanist principles he was sent to England: he attended Framlingham College in Suffolk from 1906 to 1908 and studied from 1908 to 1910 international law at the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple in London. Although a member of the Order of British lawyers, he then worked in the Ottoman Foreign Ministries’ Political Affairs Department. In October 1912 he returned to Sweden and worked in 1914 and 1915 for the "Private Sveriges Central Bank".

One of his many talents was a great aptitude for languages: as a diplomat he would speak English, French, German, Romanian, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian. In addition, he mastered the extinct languages Latin and Greek. In 1916 he married a distant cousin, the Romanian princess Marcela Elena Karadja (1896-1971), and the couple settled in Bucharest. The city was then called "Micul Paris ("Little Paris ") because of its historical buildings, beautiful architecture and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Soon they had two children, Jean Aristide Constantin Georges Caradja (1917-1993) and Marie-Marcelle Nadëje Karadja (1919-2006); she would later become a nun in Jerusalem. Constantin Karadja was granted the Romanian nationality in 1920 and he started on an impressive career: Romanian consul in Budapest (1921-1922); adviser to the Ministry of Finance, including head of the Romanian delegation at the International Economic Conference in Geneva (1927); Director of
International Policy (1927); Consul General in Stockholm (1928-1930); Consul General in Berlin (1932-1941) and Director of Consular Affairs at the Foreign Ministry in Bucharest (1941-1944). In the latter two functions, he acquired a good knowledge of the Nazi regime and its antisemitic ideology.

But Constantin Karadja was much more than a diplomat. He was an avid lover of literature. He was soon regarded an expert of incunabula, European prints dating from before 1501. Next to the well-known Bible by Johannes Gutenberg dating from 1455, the incunabula concern editions of manuscripts, printed in almost three hundred cities from Westminster to Constantinople and from Lisbon to Lübeck. The contemporary collections are stored worldwide in hundreds of libraries. Karadja was also the author of several works on the history of Romania, such as Die Ältesten gedruckten Quellen zur Geschichte der Rumänen, Gutenberg Jahrbuch 1934. In the early forties he also published one of the very first consular handbooks, an exceptional and systematic work still on the desks of many Romanian diplomats. This Diplomatic and Consular Handbook brings together laws, regulations, documents, instructions and excerpts of legal doctrine, accompanied by explanations designed to provide diplomatic and consular personnel with landmarks in their routine work.

From 1932 on, Karadja was Romanian Consul General to Germany. Berlin was the capital of the Nazis, the political center of the totalitarian regime. The events and locations are almost infinite: the rise of the NSDAP, the speeches of Hitler to the Reichstag, the blaze of the same building on February 27, 1933, the death sentence of the supposed perpetrator Marinus van der Lubbe, the massive book burning on May 10, 1933 at the Bebelplatz, the hunting of communists, the harassment of Jews, the designing and construction work to change Berlin from 1935 into Welthauptstadt Germania, the annexations of Saarland and Sudetenland, the Olympic Games of 1936, the Anschluss of Austria, the Kristallnacht of November 9, 1938, the political prison Plötzensee, the invasion in Poland, the removal of tens of thousands of Berlin Jews from railway station Grunewald, and so on. Karadja has seen them all from a very close distance. During the war, Berlin became increasingly more affected by allied bombings. Despite stubborn resistance from the SS foreign volunteers and soldiers of the Volkssturm the ruined city finally fell on April 30, 1945.

In a stream of memos, letters and reports, filed in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., Karadja repeatedly asked for action from the central authorities in Bucharest, referring to the violation of the civil rights of Jews. He pointed out that "all Romanian citizens deserve our protection, regardless of their ethnic origin or their religion" (1938). In the summer of 1938 he proposed to protect the Jews "with all diplomatic means" together with the British and Americans, invoking the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of August 17, 1925. After the Kristallnacht of November 9, 1938, he sent a detailed report to Bucharest about antisemitic violence and reflected ominously over the foreseeable future for Jews in Nazi Germany. In a subsequent letter, he stated that it was impossible for Jews to stay any longer in Germany (1938). Karadja was very well aware of the growing anti-Jewish measures and stricter legislation in Romania (for instance with regard to the issuing of Romanian passports), but continued to defend and call for help for the Jews, "that requests from Jews of Romanian nationality, asking to return to Romania, will be processed without delay on humanitarian grounds."

By Decision No. 2650 of August 8, 1940 the legal status of Jews was changed. The "Jew" designation in Romanian passports had to be added. Karadja protested successfully in writing directly to Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonescu (no relation with the state leader
Antonescu) and referring to the logical consequences for the Jews. "From a humanitarian point of view, we will further aggravate the situation of the poor souls, unnecessary obstacles will be created to be put in the way of their exodus", and "We will make the situation worse and after the war, we will be accused publicly because we participated in such an atrocity." Karadja proposed to replace the word "Jew" with the nondescript letter 'X'. Only the Romanian authorities would carry this knowledge so that no "distinguishing characteristics" were recorded for public traffic (1941). Countless Jews remained outside the transports to the gas chambers. And for those who had not yet understood in Bucharest: "All Romanians should be protected abroad without distinction" (1941).

Constantin Karadja has experienced the advance of the Soviet troops in Bucharest, where he was transferred to on June 15, 1941. The city was bombed heavily from 1943 onwards. But he continued drawing attention and asking for action to save Jews. In a letter to Minister Davidescu he stressed that "every minority, like the Jews, has to submit not only to the laws of the country, but also has the right to diplomatic and consular protection" to escape (1943). Karadja also wrote: "In international law, the principles of universal ethics and the fundamental rights of mankind are not taken into account by the German authorities" (1943).

But Karadja did not only write letters and memos. On request, he also supplied the necessary travel documents to refugees with the notification "Bon pour se rendre en Roumanie". The German Foreign Ministry protested in vain against this overt mutiny of this representative of their supposed ally. In April 1943 Karadja arranged with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Jews with Romanian nationality "were allowed to stay in Romania until it is possible for them to emigrate to Palestine". By granting this nationality he managed to thwart the deportation of many thousands of Romanian Jews from Vichy France and Hungarian Jews. Others from Germany, Greece and Italy fled to Romania as well.

In April 1941 SS Haupsturmführer Gustav Richter, the right hand of Adolf Eichmann, was sent to Romania with a special mission. In collaboration with the German Ambassador to Romania, Manfred Freiherr von Killinger, he had to prepare the deportation of 300,000 Romanian Jews. Although there were mass killings, this coordinated plan did not materialize: after the Battle of Stalingrad, from February 1943 the tide turned irreversibly for the Nazi powers.

During the spring of 1944 the Soviet Armies launched the offensive against Romania. This was followed in August by Ukrainian attacks on Iasi and Tiraspol, where the Romanian army offered little or no resistance. On August 23, 1944 a coup was committed by royalist supporters of King Mihai I against Antonescu, who was then locked up in the room with the royal stamp collection. The new government immediately switched to the Allied forces and suddenly the Embassy of former ally Germany was a besieged fortress. It can easily be imagined how the Soviet soldiers behaved against the civil population of the former Nazi ally. Romania thus ended the war with heavy fighting losses against Germany and Hungary, but was forced by the peace treaty of Paris to remunerations to the Soviet Union and had to renounce Moldova. On June 1, 1946 Antonescu was executed. In December 1947 King Mihai was forced to resign and seek asylum in Switzerland.

After the war Constantin Karadja was not spared by the new communist regime. On October 17, 1944 he was dismissed from the diplomatic service, but shortly thereafter re-appointed by the new minister. He was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences on July 30, 1946. His uncle Aristide was at that time still attached to the academy and had composed a huge collection of 125,000 Asian butterflies and moths. The diplomatic
The career of Constantin Karadja was terminated a second time on September 1, 1947. His state pension was taken away. To provide in his own maintenance he had to sell his beloved collection of books. In an environment of uncertainty and power changes within the new communist regime, but also of rising antisemitism and Jewish mass emigration to Israel, Karadja died on December 28, 1950, at the age of 61, possibly in a prison.

During his career as a diplomat, Constantin Karadja showed great courage and tenacity, evidenced by numerous diplomatic documents. His decisive actions against the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust were not in line with the government he served. His youth, education and the international influences he experienced made him a pan-European with strong humanist and intellectual bias. Human rights took center stage, only then came political and other interests. His scientific activities reflect his versatility and wide orientation.

Numbers are not important, when every life counts. The Holocaust is characterized by such incredible numbers, that one might forget too often that every single number represents a unique individual. He or she who saved one man or woman, risking his or her own life, showed courage. Those that saved tens or hundreds of people, showed courage. Constantin Karadja, diplomat by profession, lawyer by education, scientist by heart and human rights activist avant la lettre rescued 51,000 Jews from Germany, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Romania. There is no grave known to commemorate him. On September 15, 2005 he was awarded posthumously the title "Righteous among the nations" by the Yad Vashem Institute.