

Duckwitz, Georg Ferdinand

(1904--1973), German diplomat, designated by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for his role in the rescue of the Jews of Denmark during the Holocaust. During the early 1930s Duckwitz was a businessman in Copenhagen, Denmark. He joined the Nazi Party in 1932 and served in its foreign-policy department. However, he quit the job in 1935 and went to work for a private shipping firm.

At the beginning of World War II Duckwitz returned to Denmark to work for a German intelligence organization. Germany occupied Denmark in April 1940, Duckwitz was named German shipping attache. At the same time, he made contact with many Danish politicians who did not support the Nazis. In the late summer of 1943 the Germans decided to begin deporting Danish Jewry to Extermination Camps. Duckwitz immediately warned his Danish contacts of the plan, and they in turn organized a rescue operation whereby almost all of Danish Jewry was smuggled into Sweden. Duckwitz even visited the prime minister of Sweden to ensure his cooperation with the rescue effort.

Never caught by the German authorities, Duckwitz went on to a successful foreign service career in West Germany, including an ambassadorship to Denmark and the post of Foreign Ministry director-general.