

Event organized by  
the Folke Bernadotte Academy  
and the Embassy of Romania  
to the Kingdom of Sweden



A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Karadja'.

9<sup>th</sup> of March 2011

## Constantin Karadja, a European diplomat



The story and legacy  
of a great diplomat, a hero who fought  
against the Nazi regime and  
saved over 51 000 persons from  
deportation and extermination,  
a great European intellectual with  
Swedish ancestry



**Constantin Karadja** (1889-1950) was a remarkable European, a Romanian citizen of Swedish ancestry, diplomat, lawyer, historian, bibliograph and bibliophile. He was a Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy between 1946 and 1948. His illustrious career as a diplomat was cut short in 1947, by the then communist regime in Romania. In 2005, the Yad Vashem Memorial and Institute conferred to Constantin Karadja, posthumously, the title „Righteous Among Nations”, after having documented Karadja’s activity between 1931 and 1941, which saved tenth of thousands of Jews from the Nazi camps.

Constantin Karadja was born in Hague, Netherlands, in 1889, the son of prince Jean Constantin Karadja (1835–1894), envoy of the Ottoman Empire to the Nordic countries and of Mary-Louise Smith (1868–1943), daughter of the „bränvinn kungen” L.O.Smith, great Swedish businessman and senator. Constantin Karagea’s formative years were spent in Sweden, where his father was accredited as Consul General of the Ottoman Empire.

The Karadja family (different spelling versions of the name, such as Caradja or Caragea were also in circulation) was a large family, with distinguished representatives in the Ottoman Empire since the XVI-th century, and branches in Romania, Turkey and Greece. In Sweden, the Karadja family is related not only to the Smith family but also to the Wallenberg family, as an illegitimate daughter of prince Jean

Constantin Karadja, half sister to Constantin Karadja, had been adopted by Knut Agathon Wallenberg, in 1885.

Constantin Karadja married princess Marcelle Hélène Caradja, a Romanian princess, and in 1916 he became a Romanian citizen. In 1920, Constantin Karadja joined the Romanian diplomatic service and was subsequently posted as consul in Budapest (1920-1922), consul general in Stockholm (1928-1930) and consul general in Berlin (1931-1941). In 1941, Constantin Karadja was appointed head of the Consular Department in the Romanian Foreign Ministry and drafted the first ever Consular Handbook, a reference volume that still stands the test of time (and is to be published in 2011).

During his professional career, Constantin Karadja published several volumes and articles on the history of Romania. As a bibliograph and bibliophile, he set up the collection of rare and antique books at the Library of the Romanian Academy. He mastered several languages, including Romanian, Swedish (his mother-tongue), English (he was accepted in the London Bar), German, French, Latin and Greek. He wrote in many of these languages.

The communist regime installed in Romania after 1946 begun large scale persecution of intellectuals, targeting those that held important positions during the previous regime. Constantin Karadja was fired from the Romanian diplomatic service and died in 1950. Following the fall of the communist regime, he was rehabilitated in Romania and honoured as one of the most distinguished Romanian intellectuals of all times.