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## Landegg Forum

### The Architecture of Life

FROM DECEMBER 25-31, 2002, a number of UK Bahá'ís joined 130 believers from more than 20 different countries at the annual Landegg Forum. Set in the beautiful mountains overlooking Lake Constance in Switzerland, Landegg is rapidly transforming into a prestigious international university with students attending from all over the world to follow accredited degree programmes in Conflict Resolution and the study of religion.



*Della Marcus, biographer of Queen Marie of Rumania with Shirin Youssefian-Maanian from Greece*

In this impressive institution, this year's Forum was entitled The Architecture of Life and centred around keynote presentations by Mr Fariborz Sahba, the architect of the House of Worship in New Delhi and the Mount Carmel Terraces. Mr Sahba's incredible determination, confidence and trust sustained him through 25 years working directly for the Universal House of Justice on these monumental projects. His inspirational presentations certainly stirred the participants to greater acts of service and sacrifice. Within the Forum, Landegg also hosted a symposium on Biography which was part of the Rabbani Chair for Bahá'í History. The Rabbani Chair was inaugurated in 1997 by Amatu'l-Bahá Rá'háyyih Khánum with a \$10,000 donation. Landegg is in the process of raising \$1 million to create an endowment fund which will support a Bahá'í historian, as well as conferences, symposia and encourage research elsewhere. They have already raised \$350,000.

The keynote speaker of the Biography Symposium was retired member of the Universal House of Justice, Mr David Hofman, who spoke about the Challenge of Biography, particularly as it relates to Bahá'ís delving into the lives of their spiritual forebears. Throughout the weekend, a wide range of presenters shared their research on a variety of biographical subjects – the Australian Bahá'í photographer Effie Baker who, disguised as a man, travelled through Persia for eight months photographing Bábí and Bahá'í holy places; Lady Blomfield; Swiss psychiatrist and entomologist August Forel; Native American musician Kevin Locke; Queen Marie of Rumania and many more. There were also some useful workshops focusing on aspects of shaping our life's work, and excellent artistic performances from British Bahá'ís Beverley Evans and Shirin Youssefian-Maanian.

A number of friends commented that it was the best Bahá'í studies conference they had ever attended. In sum, it was a very exciting, illuminating and informative week filled with new information and insights.

Rob Weinberg



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