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Mount Carmel Terraces Public Information Special

Unprecedented media coverage across Europe, as communities promote opening of Terraces at World Centre of their Faith

ALBANIA: A 40-minute programme on the Bahá'í World Centre was aired on national television in Albania on 20 May 2001, as a result of previous visits by a journalist and a cameraman to the Holy Land. Albanian Bahá'ís and Counsellor Sohrab Youssefian were interviewed. A local television station included a Haifa Tourism Board video of the Terraces for a segment about the Faith in a 90-minute show on religions on 29 May 2001. A Bahá'í spoke over the video, explaining about the Faith and its key principles, as well as the opening events.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Albania)

BELGIUM: A front-page article in the Belgian newspaper, "Le Soir", on 16 May 2001 began by quoting "The Earth is but one country", and commended the Belgian community for its tolerance under years of wrongfully being labelled a sect in that country.

During the inaugural events, the Belgian community also had an "open house" week and exhibition at the national centre, visited by journalists and representatives of embassies and non-governmental organisations.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium)

BULGARIA: Short reports were given on two national television stations: "Kanal 1" during the news at 12:30 on 23 May 2001 and "BTV" on 23 May 2001 during the news at 12:00. Both pieces lasted about 1 minute.

A positive 3-minute report on the Terraces on 23 May 2001, broadcast by a national radio station, "Horizont", led a Bulgarian woman to call the national centre to say that she wanted to be a Bahá'í. Another national radio station "Darrik Radio" aired a report on the evening of 16 May 2001 just a few hours after a press conference held that morning.

The Bulgarian community plans to hold a national event in order to view a video of the inaugural events.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Bulgaria)

CROATIA: An initial press release sent out widely to media led to a full-page article in the daily newspaper, "Nedeljna Dalmatia", on 4 April 2001, positively reviewing the Faith, the opening of the Terraces, and some of the participants. Another article appeared in the "Jutarnji List" newspaper on 28 April 2001. Television, radio and press were present at a press conference on 10 May 2001, resulting in a 2-minute news story on the television evening news and on the radio, and a half-page article the next day in the "Glas Istre" newspaper, referring to the peacefulness of the gardens in contrast to the conflict in the region. "Mir i Dobro" (Peace and Well-Being) announced the opening of the Terraces on 20 May 2001 and broadcast a 3-minute report, "The official opening of the Bahá'í Terraces" on 27 May 2001.

A 3-minute interview with a participant in national dress, before leaving for Haifa, was aired on television on the evening news on 21 May 2001. Another "HRTV1" show, "Dobro Jutro Hrvatska", aired an interview with a Croatian Bahá'í on the Faith and the opening of the Terraces, 27 May 2001. A press conference was held in Pula 31 May 2001.

On 29 May 2001, media were also invited to a press conference on the environmental and economic impact of the Terraces, with a presentation by one of the participants.

On Wednesday 6 June, "TV Nova" broadcast a 3-minute report on the official opening of the Terraces showing Croatian delegates in traditional costumes and extracts of the video provided by OPI Paris.

(For further information contact the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Slovenia and Croatia)

CZECH REPUBLIC: Bahá'í participants were interviewed for 8 minutes on a popular morning news show. Images from "Associated Press" were included, and the Bahá'ís talked openly about the Faith.

Another 3 interviews were given to a radio programme, and 2 more radio pieces about the opening are planned. As a result of the 40-minute video provided by OPI Paris on the opening of the Terraces, the Czech TV has decided to broadcast a 3 parts series (3x7 minutes) as a feature programme at prime time shortly.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of the Czech Republic)

FRANCE: Articles have been published in national press such as in a current affairs weekly, "L'Express", in a Christian weekly, "Témoignage Chrétien", interviewing 2 French participants, in "La Vie" under the title "Un jardin pour tous les peuples du monde" (A garden for all the peoples of the world), in the Protestant weekly "Réforme", in "Notre Histoire" and in "Actualité des religions". Dozen of articles in regional and local newspapers also reported on the Terraces: "Nice Matin" and "Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace", which ran a positive article on 23 May entitled "Les Bahá'ís tournés vers Haïfa" (The Bahá'ís turned to Haifa). "Canal+", a national television broadcast company, aired a segment on the Terraces on its news channel, "TTV" and the cable channel "Voyages" (Travels) broadcast a feature programme on the Terraces.

Radio coverage included reports on the national radio stations "Europe 1", "France Inter" and the international radio station "Radio France Internationale". The Israeli Francophone radio station "La voix d'Israël" (The voice of Israël) will broadcast a 20-minute interview with a French Bahá'í who attended the opening of the Terraces.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of France)

GERMANY: The important "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" newspaper published 2 articles about the opening on 22 May 2001, and the German wire news service, "DPA", sent out an advance story on 17 May 2001. In addition, the German "SAT 1" television channel aired a very positive 3-minute news story on the evening of 22 May 2001, describing the opening as a sign of hope in Israel.

A radio interview was due to be aired on the "SWR2" radio station, and Bahá'ís gathered at the House of Worship and other locations to watch the live satellite link.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany)

HUNGARY: A national private television station, "TV2", aired 2 reports on the opening on 21 May 2001, with interviews, and in the evening news, focusing on the gardens and the international gathering held in Haifa and on 22 May the opening of the Terraces was mentioned twice in the afternoon and in the evening news broadcasts. An English language weekly newspaper, "The Budapest Sun", and a prestigious weekly magazine, "hvg", also wrote lengthy articles about the events.

The Bahá'í community is also preparing materials for a 30-minute programme for Hungarian national television. (For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Hungary)

IRELAND: "TG4", the Irish language TV station retransmitted extracts from a European broadcast on the opening of the Terraces.

A 10 minute interview with Professor Seosamh Watson

was aired on "Raidio na Life", the Irish language radio station of Dublin. The interview featured the opening of the Terraces, and Prof. Watson was asked if he thought the "gardens would improve peace prospects in the Middle East".

An article was published on the 30 May 2001 issue of the "Limerick Post" mentioning that 5 members of the local Bahá'í community had attended the inaugural events.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Ireland)

ITALY: Articles were published in "La Stampa" and "Travel", and the Israeli Tourist Office sent out press releases to 70 newspapers. The Bahá'í community also mailed press kits to media before the events. A direct satellite link was set up at the Centre for Bahá'í Studies in Acuto, which the mayor and the municipal administration agreed to attend.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy)

LUXEMBOURG: Coverage has appeared in 4 national newspapers, "Tageblatt" on 10 May 2001, "Letzebuerger Journal" on 15 May, "Republican Lorrain" on 15 May 2001 and "Luxemburger Wort" on 23 May 2001 and on 3 radio stations, the youth "Eldorado" radio station, "Radio Ara" and on "Radio RTL". There are also possibilities of further broadcasts by the "Radio Socio-Culturelle" station. The national centre was opened for live viewing of the events.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg)

THE NETHERLANDS: Five articles were published in large national and regional newspapers, resulting from reporting by Dutch correspondents in Israel. The Bahá'í World Centre press kit was translated into Dutch and sent to every local community, for use in contacting local press.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands)

NORWAY: "NRK", the biggest broadcasting corporation in Norway, recorded the opening events for later use. Due to the composer Lasse Thoresen's role in the events, all the major newspapers carried articles, with almost a full-page report in the second largest newspaper. (For details of media coverage in Norway, go to: <<http://www.bahai.no/meny.html>> under "Mediaomtale").

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway)

PORTUGAL: Press releases were sent to national media, and are being followed up by personal contacts.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal)

ROMANIA: The Bahá'ís were able to use the dignified “Queen Marie” room of the Hilton Hotel in Bucharest as the venue for a live satellite viewing on 22 May 2001. The event was co-sponsored by Israel's EL AL airlines, and attended by over 200 guests, more than three-quarters of whom were prominent non-Bahá'ís, including the Ambassador of Israel to Romania, a member of Parliament responsible for Minorities, Secretaries of State and representatives from various ministries. Other guests were architects, musicians, representatives of leading religions, major television stations, the Spiritual Department of the National Radio, and numerous other friends of the Faith. The event was covered well by “PRO TV”, the nation's most popular station, and by 2 major national newspapers.

National radio also interviewed the director of the North Israel Symphony Orchestra by telephone, who commented on the spiritual and harmonious atmosphere prevalent among the participants. The station broadcast the entire concert of 22 May 2001.

A press conference was being organised after the participants returned.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Romania)

RUSSIA: A report will be published in the next Bulletin.

SLOVENIA: Ljubljana's major daily newspaper, “Delo”, published a large article on the opening of the Terraces, with two colour photographs. “Kranj Radio” has broadcast an interview, and “Slovene TV” intends to include a report in its monthly program on religions in Slovenia.

(For further information contact the Regional Spiritual Assembly of Slovenia and Croatia)

SPAIN: In Spain, 7 public information officers teamed up with 29 local communities to inform the media of the opening events and make use of the live satellite links. To date, the events have been covered in 8 newspapers, 8 radio stations and in 5 television broadcasts. Fourteen television stations are waiting for video recordings of the events and some newspapers have planned to feature photographs of the Spanish participants in Haifa. Journalists and local authorities attended live satellite viewing of the events in 4 communities, and overall 15 localities tuned into the broadcast.

Press releases were sent to the tourism industry and media in Spain, Portugal and Latin America by the Israel Tourism Board in Spain.

The occasion also led to new opportunities for service, with many of the Bahá'ís involved in contacting media interested in continuing to serve in this field.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain)

SWITZERLAND: During the official opening of the International Book and Press Salon in Switzerland, Federal Counsellor Ruth Dreyfuss commented on the opening of the Terraces in Haifa. As she passed by the Bahá'í stand she said, “The Bahá'ís, I know, you have the inauguration of your World Centre in Haifa on 22 May”.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland)

TURKEY: “CNN” Türk national television station did a 2-minute report on the Terraces entitled “The World Centre of the Bahá'ís opened in Haifa/Israel” on 23 May 2001 at 09:09. On the same day another national television station “NTV” aired a 3-minute report “Bahá'ís gathered in Haifa at the Carmel Terraces” at 18:49 on the “Looking to World” programme. On 24 May 2001 the “Good Morning Turkey” programme on the “Star” television station broadcast twice a brief report entitled “A Garden with 19 Terraces opened in Haifa City”.

During a special gathering, organised for the Bahá'ís in the Istanbul Küçükçekmece Bahá'í Office on 22 and 23 May 2001, about 75 friends watched the event on the satellite broadcast. In Ankara another live viewing of the inauguration events was organised for the Bahá'ís on 23 May 2001 in the Çankaya Bahá'í Office.

One national and 7 local newspapers covered the events, with an emphasis on the impact of the gardens on peace. An article on 13 May 2001 in the national daily “Sabah” also referred positively to the status of the community in Turkey.

Radio coverage included “Radio 34” and “Istanbul FM” “Call for Peace” on 22 May 2001.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey)

UNITED KINGDOM: A good, 5-minute report was aired on the prestigious national “BBC Radio 4” station on 20 May 2001, with interviews with the architect, the director of the Office of Public Information in Haifa, and one of the composers, Lasse Thoresen. (To hear the report go to: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tv_radio/sunday.shtml). A 15-minute report by a Bahá'í journalist will be carried on the “BBC World Service” radio on 8 June (12:45 GMT), 11 June (17:45 and 23:45 GMT), and 13 June (03:30 GMT).

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom)

UKRAINE: The Terraces were featured in a 2,5-minute, well-made story on a primetime evening news programme on the “ICTV” national station on 16 May 2001, as a result of a presentation to the media the day before. A film crew from the station also attended the inaugural events to prepare a further television report which was aired in the evening news of 28 May 2001 at 19:00, 21:00 and 23:00. The Faith was mentioned as

the latest monotheistic religion with a diverse membership and Bahá'u'lláh was stated as being the founder. On 29 May 2001, a 7-minute report on the Faith was aired by "Kiev TV" on "City News" at 21:00. This recent coverage constitutes the first ever extensive TV coverage on the Faith in the Ukraine.

(For further information contact the National Spiritual Assembly of the Ukraine)

(All European communities are invited to continue sending reports of any public information activities, events, successes etc. related to the Terraces' inauguration events to BIC-OPI Paris for publication in the next issue of the European Public Information Bulletin. News which have been received after the closing date of this issue will be reported in the next Bulletin).

Terraces Videos and Public Information CD-ROM

BIC-OPI Paris in collaboration with the Audio-Visual Committee of the NSA of France has sent out videos of the Terraces' inauguration events to NSAs in Europe and the Francophone world. The footage, 40 minutes in length and cut from the live satellite broadcast, is available both in VHS (Pal and Secam) and Beta-Pal professional versions (for use by television stations). An English or French version is being sent to each country according to its language. An international version (in Beta-Pal format) with split audio tracks and intended to facilitate the process of translating the video into the different European languages is also being prepared. All versions may be ordered from the Librairie Bahá'ie in France (45 rue Pergolèse, 75116 Paris, France, Tel.: +33 1.45.01.83.53, Fax: +33 1.45.00.05.79, E-mail: libahaie@club-internet.fr)

BIC-OPI Paris has compiled a CD-ROM of the proceedings of the recent 8th European Public Information Management Seminar held in Acuto, Italy, 31 March – 1 April 2001. Intended to aid the friends in their follow-up work with the media for the Terraces, it also includes the contents of the CD-ROM prepared for the

Terraces press kit. The OPI Paris CD-ROM has been sent to the Seminar participants and to NSAs in Europe and the Francophone world with the Terraces videos. (For further information contact BIC-OPI Paris)

Royalty and dignitaries honour Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum

HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, joined around 150 diplomats and distinguished guests at a glittering event to pay tribute to the life of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum on 15 May 2001 in London. The evening was arranged by Her Grace the Duchess of Abercorn and her Arts for Nature organisation, of which the Duke of Edinburgh is Patron. Rúhiyyih Khánum was a founding supporter of Arts for Nature and took a great interest in its aim: to utilise the arts to encourage people of means and influence to make their contribution to preserving the world's natural beauty.

After dinner, guests viewed selected nature paintings from the collection of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and architectural drawings by the Hand of the Cause of God, William Sutherland Maxwell. The main focus of the evening was a theatrical performance inspired by Rúhiyyih Khánum's life and written by Canadian-born actress, Beverley Evans. Entitled "A life so noble", the performance took four major aspects of Rúhiyyih Khánum's life and character and personified them in four women actresses. The actresses, including West End personality Maria Friedman, were supported by four other women – from Botswana, Macau, Bolivia and Iran. Rúhiyyih Khánum's own poem, "This is Faith", was set to music by composer William Lovelady, and performed by a quintet from the Guildhall School of Music. The evening ended with a recording of Rúhiyyih Khánum speaking at a meeting in Belfast where she told the friends how much she disliked saying goodbye.

Every guest took away a specially produced gift brochure and a copy of the book, "Prescription for Living". In his closing remarks, the Duke of Edinburgh praised Rúhiyyih Khánum's tireless work for raising awareness of the environment and her contributions to the network of Religions and Conservation.

(For further information contact the Bahá'í Information Office of the United Kingdom)

Note: Please send all news concerning Public Information to be published directly to BIC-OPI, Paris no later than the 25th of each month (25 June for next issue) to the attention of Jessica Dacey. The Office of Public Information reserves the right to edit any articles and decide on the publication of all submitted material. Information that is no longer recent is less likely to be published.

Bahá'í International Community, Office of Public Information – Paris

45 rue Pergolèse, 75116 Paris, France

Tel.: +33 (0)1 45 01 78 38 • Fax: +33 (0)1 40 67 15 02 • Email: opiparis@club-internet.fr