

## **The 1905 Universal Peace Congress in Lucerne: A major local event in a tense international arena**

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The 14<sup>th</sup> Peace Congress, held in Lucerne in 1905, was one of a series of endeavours which strove to preserve peace in an increasingly unstable era. Some 400 delegates from 16 countries gathered in Lucerne.

This paper explores three aspects of the congress: Firstly, the attitudes of the bourgeois pacifist movement – which in retrospect often appear conflicting – on the eve of the First World War, as illustrated by discussions on the conflicts of the time. Also of interest is the relationship to the local setting, given that membership of the Lucerne branch of the peace society, in which the town dignitaries were well represented, grew significantly as a result of the congress. The town was regarded as a ‘pacifist Mecca’, because the ‘Museum of War and Peace’ – founded and financially supported by Jan Bloch – had been housed there in temporary premises since 1902. The museum’s future became the subject of discussions at the congress. This peace museum, the first of its kind worldwide, provides an insight – this being the third aspect – into contemporary notions not only of peace education, but of museum education too.