

**Zeitschrift:** Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte = Revue suisse d'histoire = Rivista storica svizzera  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Geschichte  
**Band:** 31 (1981)  
**Heft:** 2

**Artikel:** The international museum of war and peace at Lucerne  
**Autor:** Dungen, Peter van den  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-80861>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.02.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF WAR AND PEACE AT LUCERNE\*

By Dr PETER VAN DEN DUNGEN

"On the left bank of the Reuss, to the right of the railway station, is the International Museum of Peace and War, in the mediaeval castellated style. The institution was founded at the suggestion of the Russian privy councillor, Johann von Bloch (d. 1902), in order to illustrate the historical development of the art and practice of warfare and the ever-increasing horrors of war, and thereby to promote the movement in favour of peace." Thus Baedeker's Switzerland for 1903 informed the prospective visitor to Lucerne of the city's latest attraction.<sup>1</sup> The Museum had been opened officially on June 7th, 1902, and pacifists from all over Europe had flocked to the picturesque little city to attend the ceremony. They did not want to miss this historic occasion, which offered at the same time an opportunity to pay homage to the memory of the man who had conceived of the project, but who, unfortunately, had died at the beginning of the year. So it was that after a few words of welcome, Henri de Bloch, the founder's son, invited Frédéric Passy to cut the ribbon which held the Museum doors. Passy was the obvious choice to undertake this symbolic task: he was, at eighty, the dean of the peace movement, a fact which had also been underlined the previous December, when the Nobel Foundation made him co-recipient, with Henri Dunant, of the first Peace Prize. After having prophesied that he was opening the doors to a new era, Passy preceded the Bloch family into the building, the guests following them. Inside, a greater than life-sized bust of Jean de Bloch – the work of the Lucerne sculptor Josef Vetter – was unveiled, and his memory was honoured by Passy in a second address, in which he dwelt on Bloch's great services to humanity. Laurel-wreaths were placed beside the sculpture by the Bloch family and by Bertha von Suttner, and a hymn by the city band concluded the formal celebration.<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon the Bloch family offered a banquet at the Hotel National for some 200 guests, many of whom expressed their appreciation of Jean de Bloch in lengthy table speeches.<sup>3</sup>

\* This article makes use of papers concerning the Lucerne Museum which are in the archives of the International Peace Bureau, in the United Nations Library in Geneva (see especially: Fondation Bloch. Musée de Lucerne). The author wishes to express his gratitude to Mr. S. Welander and Mr. W. Simon in Geneva for their help, and to the British Academy for financial support.

1 *Baedeker's Switzerland*. Leipsic, Karl Baedeker, 1903, p. 100. A few days after the opening of the Museum, E. T. Moneta, the leading Italian pacifist, had written: "L'Inaugurazione del Museo della Guerra e della Pace, apertosi il 7 di questo mese in Lucerna, riesci una splendida apoteosi del suo fondatore Giovanni de Bloch, nel cui nome passerà probabilmente alla storia e nei futuri Bedeker" (*Il museo della Guerra e della Pace* in: *La Vita Internazionale*, V, 12, 20 Giugno 1902, p. 369).

2 See, e.g., A. H. FRIED, *Die Einweihung des Kriegs- und Friedensmuseums in Luzern* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. IV, nr. 11/12, 30. Juni 1902, pp. 84-89.

3 One was even printed: SAMUEL JAMES CAPPER, *Translation into English of a Speech ... at the Banquet at the Hotel National Lucerne* (etc.). Lucerne, Keller, 1902.

The opening of the Museum was widely reported, all the major newspapers of the time carrying an account of it. The unique nature of the institution was only one reason for the amount of attention which it attracted. Bloch's name by itself commanded attention, and the knowledge that he had not merely largely financed the institution, but had conceived of it, and that it represented his very personal vision – although he died prematurely to be able to witness its full realisation – provided further interest in it. If ever there was a pacifist whose appearance resembled that of a meteor it must have been Bloch. Before 1898 he was hardly known in the western world, and his name may have been familiar only to a few scholars of Russian and Polish finance, railroads and a host of other subjects in the economic sphere. They could hardly have overlooked his many voluminous studies in these fields. But the translation into German and French of his six-volume work on the war of the future (and the publication of a one-volume summary in England and the U.S.A.), made his name a household word almost overnight. The book was written in "retirement-age", and in the few years between its publication and its author's death, Bloch had virtually started on a second career, which would have filled satisfactorily another man's whole lifetime. His propagandistic efforts brought him all over Europe, every new development in the military-political field, be it in South Africa or the Far East, or nearer home, spurring him on to still more work. A great impetus to his reputation had undoubtedly been contributed by the 1899 First Hague Peace Conference, which had been convened upon the Tsar's wishes. Bloch has invariably been credited with having been the inspiration behind the august initiative, although it shall probably never be fully known what part he played in it. Pacifists may have overrated it, but diplomatic historians seem to have underrated it, if they do not casually dispose of the "myth" in its entirety.

Apart from its influence on Nicholas II, Bloch's study of war is remarkable in several respects. It had taken the author eight years to collect and research his material, often with the help of assistants. The result, even in its mere outer manifestation – six large volumes, comprising 4,000 pages – was most impressive. The sheer volume of the book made it remarkable and noteworthy, especially as pacifist propaganda had so far resulted in little more than slim pamphlets and tracts, but never in a multi-volume book. Next to impress the reader were the painstaking efforts of the author to make his analysis and conclusions as plausible and convincing as possible, by including a great many statistical tables, graphs, diagrams, drawings, etc., which often represented the outcome of experiments in which various new weapons were tested as to their accuracy, deadliness, etc. Thus the author made sure that, whenever possible, his assertions were based on hard facts and figures. Since he had realised that a great war in the future would be "total", i.e. that it would require the full mobilisation of the country's economic resources, he paid much attention to them, and to the interplay between the purely military-technical factors and the socio-economic elements. This comprehensive and realistic view of future war was a great novelty, as pacifists had commonly disregarded the military developments as much as military writers had ignored whatever lay beyond their restricted range of interest and knowledge. By bridging this gap and combining both approaches Bloch made himself famous in both pacifist and militarist circles – worshipped by the first, at least read, sometimes even with critical approval, by the second. This made him, again, a unique figure.

A third outstanding characteristic of his work, related to its scientific nature, was the intention which had originally inspired its undertaking. When he started on his study, Bloch was not a convinced pacifist, and his work was not intended to advance the movement against war. Because he knew that the military had continually failed to take notice of the evolution in economic factors which would affect the conduct and outcome of a great war, predisposed as they were to disregard anything not strictly military-technical, Bloch conceived the plan to remedy this oversight, and thus make certain that a future war should be conducted as efficiently as possible, by studying the economic organisation of the country in such an emergency. As constructor and director of several important railway lines in Russia, he had often been involved in the transportation of troops to fields of battle, and on these occasions acquired first-hand knowledge of the military ignorance of the importance of economic aspects of a great war. His studies for a history of Russian finance had confirmed this impression. Bloch – railwayman, banker, economist, scholar – was the appropriate person to undertake this neglected and complicated study of war, which he began in earnest when it was clear to him that the situation was not different in other countries, where the same unconcern and ignorance about the character of a future war was seen to prevail. This open-minded approach to the subject undoubtedly contributed to the objective-scientific character of his study, and explains the interest of the military establishment in it. “Bloch was not an apostle of Peace, any more than Newton was an apostle of the law of gravitation or Darwin an apostle of the evolution of species”, Bertha von Suttner wrote, “he was an investigator and a *savant* in the domain of the social sciences – a thinker who could connect particular facts with general laws and draw philosophical conclusions.”<sup>4</sup>

The over-all conclusion he arrived at in the end, however, made him a pacifist. For he had found that a future war between the great powers had already become, in his famous but often misunderstood words, an “impossibility”. By this he meant that such a war could no longer be a rational instrument to decide issues, because it would involve the ruin – economic, social, political – of the combatants. In this case the relationship between “ends”, whatever they might have been, and this particular “means”, war, had ceased to be meaningful. The means would engulf the ends, and devour them. Such a war would be utterly destructive and disruptive, leading to the slaughter of millions, and the overthrow of the existing order. The first World War proved him right, not only as regards the general nature of the War and its outcome, but also in respect of many details of the conduct of warfare itself – especially the use of trenches, the long drawn out nature of battle, and the great number of lives which were wasted in trying to overcome stalemate. No better compliment could have been paid to Bloch, by then largely forgotten, than that which was paid by that other great prophet, H. G. Wells, who in an article written during the holocaust called it “Bloch’s War”<sup>5</sup>. His thesis of the “impossible war” should be regarded as a fourth element contributing to the book’s success, because it offered a good excuse to some journalists to write sensational headlines and articles, in which it was sometimes argued that Bloch had prophesied or demonstrated that wars would be no more, that the old game was over once and for all. The English newspaperman William Thomas Stead greatly facilitated this view of things when he

4 BERTHA VON SUTTNER, *La Thèse de Jean de Bloch*. Paris, Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1902, p. 29.

5 H. G. WELLS, *Der Krieg Blochs* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. XVIII, nr. 5, Mai 1916, pp. 147–149.



entitled the first translation of Bloch's book to be published in English, "Is War Now Impossible?". Book reviewers and other commentators found it hard to resist the temptation of repeating this title. It also enabled not too critical critics to reject Bloch's thesis forthwith as it was flatly contradicted by the Boer War.

### *A Vision of Peace*

After the completion of his study, the detached, objective scholar became a devoted crusader against war. Bloch did not weary of expounding his thesis, again and again, to anyone who was prepared to listen. He availed himself of every opportunity to publicise his views, and spared no cost in doing so. During the 1899 Hague Conference, he spent several weeks at the Hague, informally talking to many delegates so as to exert as large an influence as possible in the hope that the Conference would really bring about a breakthrough for peace. He organised a series of four lectures, illustrated by 'magic lantern views', which were very well attended by official delegates, pacifists and journalists present at the Conference, and the general public. Well aware that only few people would find the time or take the courage to read the work in its entirety, he had previously, before the start of the Conference, summarised its conclusions in two pamphlets, which had been distributed among the delegates. The lectures were similarly printed and freely passed around. The Hague Conference was hardly over when he began working on his next enterprise, a special war exhibition to be shown at the Paris World Exhibition of 1900. Bloch was prepared to spend a million franc on the project, for which he intended to build a hall, three storeys tall, containing also a large lecture theatre. In the autumn of 1899 he travelled several times to Paris to organise and supervise the work. At this time he had also published a preliminary programme of the exhibition, entitled "The War at the Paris Exposition"<sup>6</sup>. He let it be known that the materials displayed would be kept intact after its closure, and would go on a travel circuit, first to London and then to various other large European and American cities. After the tour the war exhibits would find a permanent place in the Hague or Bern, where they would constitute a museum on the impossibility of war, a temple of peace. Bloch apparently had few doubts about the success of his plans, for he intended to donate the profits of his exhibitions to a peace institute<sup>7</sup>.

Early in the new year it was reported, however, that serious objections had been raised against Bloch's proposed exhibition from Russia, and that as a result it had to be curtailed. It is reasonable to suppose that the military were responsible for these difficulties as they had previously attempted to silence Bloch at the Hague, by threatening to "report" him in Moscow. He was, however, not easily intimidated, for not only was he an Imperial Councillor of State, but he was friendly with the Tsar, whom he had personally instructed about his book. It was reported that the objections to Bloch's planned exhibition did certainly not originate with Nicholas II<sup>8</sup>. Bloch had entrusted a number of Swiss officers with the preparation and

6 JEAN DE BLOCH, *La Guerre à l'Exposition de Paris*. Paris, Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1899, 56 pp.

7 *Die Ausstellung des Krieges* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. I, nr. 19, 6. November 1899, p. 123.

8 *Die Ausstellung des Krieges* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. II, nr. 2, 8. Januar 1900, p. 6.

organisation of the work, and now he was offered space in the "Exposition of the Peace Societies", which had been jointly organised by the Permanent Bern Peace Bureau and the Central French Peace Bureau, in the Swiss section of the Social Sciences Exhibition<sup>9</sup>. Some of his exhibits were also shown in the section "Education". They consisted of 32 tables, measuring 1,80 by 0,90 metres, which aimed to summarise visually the theory expounded at length in his book. They were divided into three sections, viz. the mechanism of war, naval war, and economic and financial consequences of war. Every table was provided with a brief explanatory note, or with quotes from the work of well-known military writers or economists. In the printed catalogue to his own exhibition, Bloch wrote that the study of such a voluminous work as his "The War of the Future" was difficult and strenuous. The Universal Exposition at Paris furnished at this moment, when war raged in South Africa, an "extremely favourable occasion to popularise all the information concerning the nature and the effects of a future war, through the application of the figurative method"<sup>10</sup>.

Bloch's belief that it was "more effective to speak to the eyes than to the ears"<sup>11</sup>, and his predilection to present his theory and findings in graphical form, whenever possible, was already shown in his book, where the reader's attention was almost automatically drawn to the many folding tables, diagrams, etc., which often conveyed a more vivid, immediate and lasting impression than could have been derived from reading several pages of the accompanying text. His use of slides during the Hague lectures and of tables at the Paris exhibition only continued, now in a more explicit manner, this preference. The idea of founding a museum was the next logical step in the same direction. Already in Paris he was very busy looking into all the details necessary for carrying out this scheme. He interviewed artists, spent a good deal of time in looking up opticians and manufacturers of cinematograph apparatus, and in making inquiries as to the purchase of all manner of weapons, ancient and modern. Bloch considered the creation of a museum also a necessary step, because it would enable him to catch the attention of many people who otherwise would have escaped him. He realised very well that his large book was never going to be a bestseller, and useful as publishing extracts and popular summaries of his thesis were, the best and probably only way to reach large masses was by means of a museum. A museum, it may be noted, which was unique in that its *raison d'être* was to bring about the extinction of the phenomenon the history of which it depicted. Its message was that the very forces which had created modern militarism were already bringing about its demise. Bloch shared the liberal view that in an increasingly democratic age, the masses could play an important part in the process of eliminating war, because the rulers, even in monarchies, could only disregard popular sentiment at their own peril. Pacifist instruction was necessary to sway that sentiment behind the movement against war. The elimination of war was tantamount to the elimination of ignorance. For Bloch, the logic of pacifist propaganda and the necessity of this enterprise, by means of a museum, were not tempered by

9 A. H. FRIED, *Von der Pariser Weltausstellung. I. Die Ausstellung des Berner Bureaus*, in *ibid.*, vol. II, nr. 24, 18. Juni 1900, pp. 94-95.

10 JEAN DE BLOCH, *La Guerre Future. Que sera-t-elle? Résumé et conclusions des tableaux exposés par Jean de Bloch*. Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900. Palais des Congrès, Section Suisse. Paris, Lib.-impr. réunies, 1900 (p. 4).

11 FRÉDÉRIC PASSY, *Jean de Bloch et le Musée de la Guerre et de la Paix*. Paris, Imprimerie Paul Dupont, 1902, p. 20.

more mundane considerations, viz. the practical realisation of such a project. He was wealthy enough to take the financial burdens upon himself, and probably deemed the investment the best he could ever make, because its expected return was bound to accrue to all men and advance the cause of civilisation. Bloch's museum was thus founded in the best philanthropical tradition.

### *The Lucerne Museum*

The choice of Lucerne was an obvious one. It was at the heart of Switzerland, as Switzerland was at the heart of Europe. It was centrally located, and a major tourist attraction, which fulfilled the primary requirement; Switzerland's neutrality was an additional advantage. In September 1900 Bloch gave a lecture before the Lucerne city authorities, in which he proposed the founding of a museum. They welcomed his suggestion and offered favourable arrangements. Bloch had been in Lucerne several times before, for his health and rest, but the idea to make it the home of his planned permanent exhibition had probably come from the Swiss officers whom he had involved in his endeavours at Paris, especially Colonel Bircher from Aarau and Major Egli from Bern<sup>12</sup>. Both were now playing an important part in the establishment of the museum. On 31 October 1900, the Committee of Initiative for the creation and exploitation of the museum – which preceded the limited liability company, founded a fortnight later<sup>13</sup>, – signed a contract with Bloch. A prospectus was then released concerning the emission of 200 shares of 500 franc each, which was meant to subscribe 100,000 franc to the planned total capital investment of 180,000 franc. Bloch himself was responsible for 80,000 franc, and for contributing another 70,000 franc in loans. In addition, he donated much material, valued at 100,000 franc, to be displayed in the museum. It would be housed in the building which had been erected for the 1901 Swiss shooting festival, although some reconstruction had to be done<sup>14</sup>. The building, which resembled an old castle, was in perfect harmony with its surroundings, and could not fail to attract those who visited Lucerne. It was standing just beside the railway station on the shore of the lake, with the Pilatus and Stanserhorn mountains rising in the background. It would indeed have been dif-

12 Cf. JAKOB ZIMMERLI, *Das Internationale Kriegs- und Friedensmuseum in Luzern* in: *Die Schweiz*, vol. VI, nr. 15, 1902, p. 362. Almost inevitably, the establishment of the Museum and the city's support of it also became the subject of attacks by a few local politicians and journalists who saw this as an opportunity to advance their own sectarian or party-political interests. These criticisms were condemned in the national press. See, e.g., *Ein Vorstoss gegen das Internationale Kriegs- und Friedensmuseum in Luzern* in: *National-Zeitung*, Basel, 14. 3. 1902, and *Friedensmuseum in Luzern* in: *Intelligenzblatt*, Bern, 18. 3. 1902.

13 See the (printed) "Statuten der Aktiengesellschaft des Internationalen Kriegs- und Friedensmuseums in Luzern", dated 13 November 1900 (and, after the capital had been raised, the new ones of 30 August 1909). According to art. 3, the aim of the Society was: "Durch Ausstellung der ihr durch Herrn Staatsrat von Bloch laut Vertrag vom 31. Oktober 1900 schenkungsweise überlassenen Gegenstände, sowie durch selbständige Erwerbung solcher, durch plastische und bildliche Darstellung, durch Vorträge usw. für die Propaganda der Friedensidee zu wirken."

14 *Staatsrath von Bloch's Friedensmuseum in Luzern* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. III, nr. 3/4, 28. Januar 1901, pp. 15–16, and *Vom Bloch'schen Friedensmuseum* in: *ibid.*, vol. III, nr. 5/6, 11. Februar 1901, p. 21.



ficult, as a well-known pacifist writer of the time remarked, “to find, in the length and breadth of Europe, a more effective situation”<sup>15</sup>.

While busy making preparations for the Lucerne Museum, Bloch still found time, in the summer of 1901, to go to London, to give a series of lectures before the Royal United Services Institution. Their invitation showed the respect which professional soldiers had for his views, which were daily proven right by the experiences in the South African War. He profited from the occasion to rent space in the exhibition halls at Earls Court, London, where he planned to give lectures, with slide projections, in the spring of 1902. With the Lucerne Museum not yet fully established, he was already thinking of repeating the experiment in other cities. He gave Edwin D. Mead a long typewritten outline of his scheme with the request to submit it to William Mather, George Cadbury and other leading peace men in England, whose cooperation might be enlisted. He also spoke of New York and Washington as appropriate locations for a similar museum in the U.S.<sup>16</sup>. It would hardly have been possible for Bloch to finance all these institutions himself, and this was not his intention. But he took the initiative to interest others, and guide them on their way. All this was abruptly ended by his death.

The rooms in which the exhibits were shown were merely vast sheds, each divided into a number of compartments. There were fourteen of these, each dealing with a particular aspect of war<sup>17</sup>. To every compartment had been assigned one or more specialists, who were responsible for the contents and the organisation of the exhibits in their particular field. Most, but not all, of these experts were Swiss army officers, Bircher, Egli and Lieut.-Col. Pietzcker being most prominent among them. The entrance hall of the Museum was taken up altogether by a very complete collection of weapons, from antiquity to the present; their range, accuracy, penetrative power etc. were indicated, comparisons drawn, conclusions hinted at. The room leading out of this hall was devoted to strategy and tactics, covering the period from Greece and Rome to the Boer War. Notable features in this section were the large models in relief of famous battlefields. About 40 of these were represented, many of them referring to Swiss battles. Three sections were devoted to the history of fortress warfare, for which the book by Viollet-le-Duc, “*Histoire d’une Forteresse*”, served as a guide. Another compartment, dealing with the effects of modern weapons and the care for the wounded, contained a gruesome collection of human skulls and skeletons, riddled by bullets or shattered by shells. In this room also was the skeleton of a horse, riddled by bullets which had been fired from different ranges, showing the difference in explosive effect as the range was increased or decreased. The chef of the railway division of the general staff of the Swiss army had been responsible for the exhibits showing the role of railways in war; a professor at the Polytechnic for explaining how electricity would affect the next great war. Special compartments were also devoted to the instruction of the infantry, the organisation of large armies, and to naval warfare. The walls of the room in which the army organisation was depicted were hung with coloured diagrams, showing the military expenditures of the great European powers and the

15 G. H. PERRIS, *Jean de Bloch, and the Museum of War and Peace at Lucerne*. London, International Arbitration Association/ Lucerne, Musée de la Guerre et de la Paix, 1902, p. 5.

16 EDWIN D. MEAD, *Introduction* in: Jean de Bloch, *The future of war*. Boston, Ginn & Co., 1902. The book is wrongly dated 1899.

17 The Museum’s guide – of which several editions were published – contains a very detailed inventory of the museum’s riches, comprising between 4 and 5,000 objects.



cost of wars now and in the past. The naval section was the only one not yet complete, as no models had as yet been acquired.

What undoubtedly appealed most to the public was the gallery with the dioramas, which had been the special responsibility of Jean de Bloch – and also his creation. These were large paintings of fightings, with the foregrounds admirably put together with real rocks, trees, grass slopes, and uniforms, thus conveying a very vivid and realistic impression. Their object was to show the difference between tactical methods in the past and in the present. The tactics employed by the Russians in their attacks on Plevna in 1877 were contrasted, for instance, with the dispersed formations employed in the Boer War. The effect of these tableaux was admirable, and according to one report they proved so attractive to the visitors on the opening day that the rest of the museum was completely neglected<sup>18</sup>. Two other divisions were more explicitly devoted to the subject of peace: one showed the economic costs of war and armed peace, the other on international law contained the texts of all the great treaties entered into between the powers, including the decisions of the recent Hague Peace Conference. The treaties were printed in large characters, and ranged in frames around the walls. There was furthermore a fair-sized auditorium, where lectures with the cinematograph were given on subjects of interest to the visitors. A library of war and peace was added in later years. Keen on making the exhibition as comprehensive as possible, and not willing to leave available space lying in waste, Bloch used the plots of ground outside the museum for showing short sections of full-sized trenches, copies of a Boer covered trench and of a Boer wire entanglement, and specimens of portable bridging material. W. T. Stead found the collection of exhibits “very complete, very interesting, and very varied”. It was not too technical to puzzle the casual visitor, while scientific enough to satisfy the serious military student. This felicitous combination of the popular and the scientific, the attractive and the instructive, augured well for the future of the museum<sup>19</sup>. But, as we shall presently see, not all pacifists shared Stead’s opinion.

### *Controversy over the Museum’s Character*

When Bloch announced his plan to establish a museum, there was apparently a widely expressed apprehension by pacifists, that he would make it too much an instrument for the propagation of his own particular view as expressed in his book, namely his theory concerning the impossibility of war. Those who shared this apprehension were relieved to find that Bloch had, to all appearances, taken to heart the advice of the Swiss officers with whom he had become associated since the days of the Paris Exposition. For not a single trace of his unconventional thesis could be found in the museum, which turned out to be, indeed, a museum of war rather than peace, or of propaganda for peace. This contemporary evaluation<sup>20</sup> misunderstood both Bloch’s essential thesis and the way in which he had arrived at it in the book, and now attempted to do the same in the exhibition. That war had become impossible was, to be sure, his major contention, and one which pacifists ought not to have

18 *A Museum of Peace and War. Interesting collections donated by M. de Bloch just opened to the public in: The New York Times*, 29 June 1902, p. 32.

19 W. T. STEAD, *Object lessons in war and peace. Opening of the Bloch Museum in Lucerne in: The Review of Reviews*, vol. 26, 15 July 1902, pp. 37–40.

20 For an example of which see the account of the museum’s opening in the American newspaper just mentioned.

played down or feared because it could be used to ridicule them. Only it was necessary that they clearly understood what was meant by it, namely the end of war in a Clausewitzian, not total or absolute, sense. Bloch made the contention, moreover, in respect to wars between great powers only.

He had arrived at this conclusion by studying the nature and evolution of war, particularly by taking into consideration the latest technical developments in the means of warfare, and the economic requirements and effects of war. He found that war itself was testifying against war. As noted already, this approach resulted from his initial intention not to write a work of pacifist propaganda, but to proceed in as scientific and objective a manner as possible. He did not conceive differently the way in which the museum should drive home its message. In this respect, its visual representation was fully equal to its verbal one. The whole logic of Bloch's argument pointed in the direction of the necessity of peace, but he preferred to leave this conclusion to the reader and visitor respectively – least of all did his analysis start from this premiss. It will hardly elicit surprise to find that such innovation would meet criticism from ordinary pacifist propagandists for making “concessions” to war and the military, and for obscuring the message, or not being sufficiently straightforward about it. After the opening of the museum, the fear originally expressed that it might stress “peace” and the impossibility of war too much – to the detriment of the peace movement – was soon transformed into its opposite.

Some pacifists had noted a “curious feature” pertaining to the inauguration celebration, viz. the presence of a large number of Swiss officers in uniform<sup>21</sup>. One explanation proffered was that many Swiss officers of good position belonged to local peace societies – a palatable but rather precarious account as it made no mention of their large involvement in the establishment and management of the museum – until May 1903, when J. Zimmermann took over, the museum director was Lieut.-Col. Pietzcker, – and contained no indication of its character and contents. A further ground for dissatisfaction was provided by the generally favourable impression which the museum made on members of the military profession, for it was almost a pacifist dogma that whatever carried their approval must inevitably, in the nature of things, be the subject of pacifist reprobation. The same reasoning also prevailed on the opposite side, and was nicely illustrated by the introduction to a fairly lengthy article which a military review devoted to the opening of the Lucerne museum<sup>22</sup>. If the depiction of the horrors of war, with the aim of advancing the cause of peace – Bloch's objective, according to the writer – had really been forcefully impressed upon the visitor, then no officer could have been urged to set foot in the museum. But this was not the case at all, if one disregarded one or two paintings which showed the horrors and miseries of war in the manner of Verestchagin. The author was pleasantly surprised to find “a rigorous scientific, objective exposition” of the historical evolution of war, its weapons and its conduct. A characteristic distinguishing this museum from similar ones like the Hall of Fame in Berlin or the Vienna Army Museum was the absence of the patriotic sentiment, or of professional enthusiasm – the Lucerne museum being purely historical in nature. He gave a detailed account of the several compartments, commenting that other

21 Cf. e.g. *Opening of the Bloch Museum at Lucerne* in: *The Westminster Gazette*, 10 June 1902, p. 3. This report was attributed to W. T. Stead. See *Opening of Peace Museum* in: *The Jewish Chronicle*, 13 June 1902, p. 22.

22 *Das Internationale Museum für Krieg und Frieden in Luzern* in: *Militär-Wochenblatt*, vol. 87, nr. 62, 12. Juli 1902, pp. 1655–1660.

museums might have as rich, sometimes even richer, collections which, however, could not surpass the instruction which the Lucerne museum offered. Its collection was rich, but especially so in instruction. He recommended that no visitor to Lucerne should miss the museum, least of all the teacher in military training schools. The author concluded that the museum was superfluous if its aim was to advance the cause of peace by showing the misery of war, since everyone was convinced of this. What had kept the peace in Europe since 1871 was the practice of general conscription, which now involved the entire population in questions of war and peace. "Si vis pacem para bellum" would always remain true.

Even more than the military man it must have struck the peace man that, in the words of one of them, "there was not apparent any bias towards Peace"<sup>23</sup>. But whereas the former regarded this as a praiseworthy omission, the latter saw it as a failure of commission. The matter was raised at the highest possible level as early as September 1903, when the annual Universal Peace Congress met at Rouen and Le Havre. Lucia Ames Mead, a well-known pacifist representing the American Peace Society, complained about the insufficient part "peace" played in the museum, which she had recently visited. In her opinion, pacifist groups should remedy this situation by sending tableaux and documents, illustrative of the work undertaken by their societies, to the museum, in order to impress upon it its veritable character and destination. Her plea was supported by Emile Arnaud, the president of the congress<sup>24</sup>. When, half a year later, Alfred H. Fried – the founder-editor of the *Friedens-Warte* and, with Bertha von Suttner, the driving force behind the peace movement before the Great War – reviewed the annual report of the Lucerne museum, he found that the section on the peace movement had, as before, been treated in an unacceptable stepmotherly fashion. Nothing had been done to assuage Mrs. Mead's just complaint, which Fried now reiterated: – "It is absolutely necessary that the peace section of the museum be considerably enlarged, so that its aim may be better understood. Today, Bloch's creation hardly differs from an ordinary army museum. It would be important to employ a specialist, who would be able to organise the peace section in as objective a manner as possible, such as has been achieved for the technical war exhibits"<sup>25</sup>.

In his reply of 28. 4. 1904, J. Zimmermann, the director of the museum, tried to mitigate Fried's criticism by drawing attention to the fact that "peace" was much less amenable to a gripping exhibition than "war"; the two could hardly be separated, and peace could only be approached through its opposite. He referred Fried to the latest catalogue, which showed the considerable additions which had recently been made to the sections "Economy", "International Law" and "Peace". Upon the initiative of Dr. Zimmerli, the vice-president of the museum's

23 J. HUNT COOKE, *A Visit to the International Museum of Peace and War at Lucerne* in: *The Herald of Peace*, vol. 29, 1 December 1903, p. 149.

24 Cf. *Bulletin Officiel du 12e Congrès Universel de la Paix tenu à Rouen et au Havre* (22–27 sept.). Berne, Bureau International de la Paix, 1903, p. 118. Following a request by the Museum director, she sent him the next month a lengthy memorandum, entitled "Suggestions for the Development of the Peace and War Museum". Many of them were excellent, and were ultimately incorporated in the Museum. Fortunately, the somewhat vindictive tone in which she started – "Fifty chairs ... to be placed in the rooms of Peace and no seats in the rooms for War" – was not typical of the rest of her memorandum.

25 Luzern in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. VI, nr. 4, April 1904, p. 76. This periodical had also become the organ of publication for the Lucerne museum. See letter of 30. 5. 1904 by Fried to Elie Ducommun, the secretary of the International Peace Bureau in Bern.



management committee, it had furthermore been decided to put a moratorium on expenses for the expansion of the war section, all available means for the current year to be used exclusively for the enlargement of the peace section. Zimmermann mentioned three ways in which this would be brought about: first, through the graphical representation, on large boards, of the most important arbitration cases. Then the museum would institute a "peace wall", i.e. a wall hung with pictures of leading pacifists, with quotations from their work. For this purpose, a Mr. Labbé from Paris donated two artistic portraits of Kant and Grotius, whereas the Bloch family provided the museum with a painting of Jean de Bloch, done by Jan ten Kate, some of whose famous paintings, including "War on War" could be seen in the museum. Lastly, the availability of peace literature, for sale and free distribution, had already been much expanded<sup>26</sup>. In a four-page letter of 2 May, 1904, Fried returned to the matter. He reminded Zimmermann that the intentions of the founder of the Museum were well known to him, as he had worked closely with Bloch, with whom he had often discussed his project. Already at the opening ceremony he had noticed the inadequacy of the exhibits regarding peace; the Museum guide as well as comments from visitors further reinforced his views. Neither paintings depicting the horrors of war nor portraits of leading pacifists could constitute the heart of the peace section. At present no visitor was able to get an idea of the history, growth, strength and successes of the peace movement, whereas this should precisely be the main aim. It was of the utmost importance that the visitor, whose heart had been shocked and his mind set thinking when confronted with the tools of war and destruction, would, upon entering the peace hall, be put at ease, and would find consolation in the knowledge that a great and serious movement for peace was existing. Zimmermann wrote a lengthy reply, in which he tried to reconcile views while also promising further improvements along the lines suggested.

Later in the year, professor Pierre Clerget of Le Locle (Switzerland), could inform the delegates to the 13th Universal Peace Congress that the directors of the museum had carried out the suggestions made by Mrs. Mead at the previous congress<sup>27</sup>. But she and others were not to be placated by symbolic gestures, and they kept calling for a radical change in the museum's policy. Throughout this period, and in fact from the very beginning, the Museum could count on the help and good offices of Elie Ducommun to build up the peace section. On numerous occasions he was approached by the Museum's director for information, letters of support, and help with the acquisition of relevant material. He provided the Museum with literature and peace pamphlets for its bookstall, corresponded with peace leaders all over the world to obtain details and photographs of famous precursors or contemporaries, provided the Museum with an interest-free loan for ten Kate, so that his paintings, on loan to the Museum, did not have to be sold because of the "miserable circumstances" in which the artist found himself, etc. Coming in the midst of great difficulties (cf. next section), Ducommun's death in December 1906 was for the Museum "an irreplaceable loss" indeed<sup>28</sup>.

26 *Brief J. Zimmermann* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. VI, nr. 5, Mai 1904, p. 99. Also *Luzern* in: *ibid.*, vol. VII, nr. 4, April 1905, p. 79.

27 *Official Report of the 13th Universal Peace Congress held at Boston, Mass., U.S.A.* (3-8 Oct.). Boston, The Peace Congress Committee, 1904, p. 48.

28 Letter Zimmermann to International Peace Bureau, 15. 12. 1906. Ducommun's tireless efforts on behalf of the Museum are well documented in the Bureau's archives. Often he acted as a one-man liaison office between the Museum and peace leaders and institutions it wished to contact.



From the start it had been clear that the museum could remain in its present place only for a small number of years. The city of Lucerne had provided the ground (being valued at well over a million franc) and the use of the building free of charge, even electricity and water being freely provided, with the understanding that after six years permanent exhibition space had to be found elsewhere. This period allowed sufficient time to assess the desirability and possibility of continuing the enterprise. As regards the number of visitors, the main yardstick of success, the museum directors could be satisfied. In the first full year of opening (1903), the total number of visitors was 59,000 (twice the population of the host city). The figure increased to 62,000 in the following year and 65,000 in 1905 and this figure was maintained in subsequent years. It amounted to 10,000 visitors a month, as the museum was only open during the tourist season, from 15 April until 31 October. Even though the number of paying entrants was much less, e.g. 29,000 in 1902, 38,000 in 1903 and 1904, 45,000 in 1905, receipts from admissions were adequate to provide for maintenance, general expense, and acquisition of new objects of interest<sup>29</sup>. It was appropriate that the immediate future of the museum would come up for discussion at the 14th Universal Peace Congress, which was held in Lucerne, in September 1905. During a collective visit to the museum, the delegates were informed about its precarious situation. Elie Ducommun expressed his gratitude to the city of Lucerne for its generous help in establishing the museum. His joy was tempered by the realisation that, if in two years' time the necessary funds for buying another piece of land and constructing a new building were not found, the collections which they were presently admiring would have to be dispersed. This was confirmed by Dr. Zimmerli, who appealed to all friends of peace to do their utmost to ensure the survival of the museum<sup>30</sup>.

The following day, the last of the congress, Houzeau de Lehaie, the Belgian senator, read a communication concerning the museum, in which he proposed, upon a request by Zimmerli, the nomination of a special commission charged with raising the funds necessary to secure a site, to which it would be necessary, in a few years, to move the museum. Only minutes later, however, the commission could already have been discharged of its task, when Houzeau de Lehaie joyfully announced that one of the participants to the congress, count Gurowski de Wczele, had just told the commission that he would place a maximum sum of 600,000 franc at the disposal of the museum's directorate for the purchase of a plot of ground and the erection of a building. This wholly unexpected announcement<sup>31</sup> was wildly greeted by the delegates, who did not calm down until the applauded Gurowski made a short address. He attached two conditions to his generous offer, viz. the museum would be known as the "museum of peace and of the horrors of war", and

29 These and other details are contained in: Internationales Kriegs- und Friedensmuseum in Luzern. *Bericht des Verwaltungsrates an die VI. Generalversammlung über das Geschäftsjahr 1905* (Luzern, 1906, 15 pp.).

30 *Bulletin Officiel du 14e Congrès Universel de la Paix tenu à Lucerne* (19-23 Sept.). Berne, Bureau International de la Paix, 1905, pp. 86-87.

31 Afterwards, Gurowski told Zimmermann that the idea had come to him quite spontaneously after having listened to Ducommun and Zimmerli in the Museum. In his letter of 4. 10. 1905 to Ducommun, Zimmermann wrote: "Selten hat die Rhetorik so schöne Erfolge aufzuweisen ... In der Geschichte des Museums wird der Name des Herrn Ducommun neben dem des Stifters mit freudigem Dank genannt werden."

he would be its only benefactor. Jacques Novikow, the Russian-Franco sociologist and pacifist, observed that whereas a Pole had founded the museum, another one was now responsible for assuring its conservation<sup>32</sup>. Gurowski was not only former Austrian Consul-General at Nice, but also president of the Nice section of the French Society for Arbitration. Up to the moment of his *deus ex machina*-like appearance on the stage of the Lucerne congress, he had been a relatively unknown figure in the international peace movement. He had attended previous congresses, notably the one held at Paris in 1900 and another one in Monaco, two years later, without in any way distinguishing himself. But his name had come to the fore in 1898 in Turin, during a general assembly of delegates of peace societies. He spoke of the impending danger of war between Chile and Argentina over a border dispute, and urged the assembly to send an address to the governments of both countries, imploring them to submit their differences to arbitration. He suggested the immediate sending of telegrams, which might be followed, if necessary, by a personal representation of peace society delegates. Gurowski declared himself willing to defray the cost of these initiatives, however expensive they might turn out to be. The assembly approved this generous proposition, and expressed its gratitude towards the benefactor<sup>33</sup>. In view of his second appearance in the limelight, seven years later, this episode takes on significance, and will help us to explain Gurowski's erratic behaviour which was to follow.

On 24 September 1905, the day following the last day of the congress, the deed of gift was signed. The gift of 600,000 franc was to be known as the "Gurowski Foundation". It would be administered by a committee, chaired by Gurowski, and further composed of Elie Ducommun, de Lehaie, Emile Arnaud and Dr. Zimmerli. The document stipulated that "the act of foundation shall respect the obligations of the society represented by Mr. Zimmerli concerning Mr. Jean de Bloch or his rightful claimants". Arnaud, a lawyer, was to draw up the act. A place near the Löwendenkmal was already considered for acquisition, and it was thought that the new museum could be inaugurated in the spring of 1907. These details were announced in an official communication issued by the museum, which stressed that the donor's intention to emphasise, in the reorganised institute, the peace section, fully accorded with the plans of the present museum management. Only the "really typical" elements of the war section would be retained in the new museum<sup>34</sup>. The directors had of course no choice but to agree with whatever changes Gurowski intended to make to the character of the museum. In a communiqué of 19 December it announced that Gurowski had bought from the city of Lucerne, at a cost of 200,000 franc, the Wirz estate in the Zürichstrasse, near the Löwendenkmal. The estate measured 1040 sq. metre. The contract of sale stipulated the procedure to be followed in case of default of the museum company; the city of Lucerne was ultimately prepared to continue the enterprise as far as it would be capable to do so<sup>35</sup>. As soon as the property had changed ownership, on 1 May 1906, a start would be made with the construction of the building.

32 *Bull.*, o.c., pp. 77–80. See also the information in the Bericht (o.c.) which reports that the Conference "für uns eine unerwartete und höchst glänzende Lösung der Frage der Fortexistenz des Museums brachte" (p. 3).

33 *Procès-Verbal de l'Assemblée Générale des Délégués des Sociétés de la Paix, Turin, 1898*. Berne, Bureau International Permanent de la Paix, 1898, p. 19.

34 *Die Stiftung Gurowski* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. VII, nr. 10, Oktober 1905, p. 202.

35 *Stiftung Gurowski de Wczele* in: *ibid.*, vol. VIII, Januar 1906, p. 16. For details of the transaction, see *Kaufvertrag*, signed on 5. 12. 1905 by the City Council and six days later

Gurowski, however, soon changed his mind – apparently about the choice of property. He had found a place on the right-hand shore of the lake in beautiful surroundings (“an der Halde”), which was ten times as large as the Wirz estate, and only cost 10 franc per sq. metre, compared with 200 franc for the latter, which thus required twice the amount necessary for the new choice. It was objected by the museum directorate that the price differential in favour of the new location at the same time badly reflected on its accessibility. It was out of the city centre, and prospective visitors might be put off by the travelling to be done. Both the museum’s principal aim – attracting as many people as possible – and practical financial considerations, made the new choice highly unsatisfactory. The museum deplored that this development had led to silly rumours in the press; it gave the assurance that Gurowski had no intention of abandoning his scheme, and that the city administrators were prepared to meet his wishes in any way possible<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, however, Dr. Zimmerli, getting nervous, sent a confidential letter to Arnaud, in which questions of litigation were raised – “en vue d’éventualités lointaines mais possibles” (4. 2. 1906). In a letter sent two days later the city council, meanwhile, indicated to Gurowski its willingness to annul the sale and arrange for a new one. They deplored Gurowski’s decision which, it was felt, was not at all in the interest of the Museum. Ducommun had written to the count on 22nd January, making the same point. In the following months it transpired that the suggestions made in the press had not been without foundation. After a letter of 9. 2. 1906 in which he informed the city council that he would come to Lucerne to discuss the new estate as soon as the weather would improve, nothing was heard of Gurowski, and it proved impossible to establish any communication with him. In a laconic letter the city informed him on 20. 4. 1906 that the cool season was now over, and that the climatic conditions were now very pleasant. It also reminded him that, according to the original contract, the full price of the Wirz estate was due in a few days, by 1st May. This was put in because it had become clear that the estate “an der Halde” was not available on the favourable conditions which Gurowski had mentioned. Finally, in a long letter, dated 10th May, and which contained a detailed chronology of events, the city made a last appeal to his sense of justice and loyalty, threatening legal action<sup>37</sup>.

A letter to Gurowski (23. 4. 1906) in which Ducommun offered his good services in the hope of arriving at an “entente”, meanwhile had elicited a response. Via Philippe Casimir, secretary of the Nice section of the French Society for Arbitration (of which Gurowski was the president), the elusive count accused the city of Lucerne and Dr. Zimmerli of having pressurised him all along into signing a contract against his wishes. It was now disagreeable to him to have anything further to do with the city of Lucerne, and he had decided to construct a peace museum in

by Gurowski, and the *Bericht und Antrag des Stadtrates von Luzern an den Tit. Grossen Stadtrat*, signed 27. 12. 1905. The city of Lucerne was again most forthcoming in its support for the venture; a letter which the council had sent to Gurowski on 30. 9. 1905 concluded by saying that “the citizenry of Lucerne will, no doubt, express its gratitude at the next opportunity by bestowing an honorary citizenship upon you”.

36 *Stiftung Gurowski* in: *ibid.*, vol. VIII, Februar 1906, pp. 37–38.

37 It was later fully reprinted in *Der Friede*. Bulletin des internationalen Friedensbureaus in Bern. Vol. XIII, nrs. 17–18, 20. Sept. 1906, pp. 3–5 (“Graf Gurowsky und das neue Friedensmuseum”). In an introduction it was, quite properly, stated that the well-documented letter showed “that on our part nothing had been neglected to secure the Foundation, and no element was missing in the chain of obligations”.



Nice instead. He had no obligations whatsoever regarding the city of Lucerne, only vis-à-vis the peace movement, and these he would honour. Through Dr. Zimmerli the mayor of the city was informed of the contents of this letter (of 26. 4. 1906), upon which the city sent its ultimatum, mentioned above (without, however, making any reference to Casimir's letter). The receipt of this threatening communication led him to write another letter to Ducommun, as scurrilous as the first one. Ducommun was now asked to act as referee, whereas it was also made clear that the count was not going to change his mind – he could no longer entertain friendly relations with “ces messieurs de Lucerne”. He would construct his museum in Nice; if the contract was annulled, he might subscribe to shares of the Lucerne museum.

Contacts between Gurowski and Arnaud concerning a peaceful settlement took place during the summer months on the basis of a document drawn up by Ducommun. It offered Gurowski a last chance “to escape from total moral bankruptcy”<sup>38</sup>. On 27. 8. 1906 he wrote an uncompromising letter to Ducommun, repeating his previous allegations and informing him that “my museum in Nice” was almost completed, and that he could not build or support museums in every city of Europe. As far as he was concerned, that was the end of the matter – and his solicitor was now charged to deal with any further correspondence “in case you would still have to write to me on this subject”. Gurowski was conspicuously absent from the 15th Universal Peace Congress which took place in Milan, not too far from his home, in September 1906. Philippe Casimir recalled, for the benefit of the delegates, Gurowski's work in the cause of peace, especially his proposal made in Turin in 1898. Gurowski, he concluded, intended “to participate in the subscription” for the Lucerne museum, “but he wanted above all to create in France the first museum of peace, by designing his castle Montboron, in Nice, for this purpose”. Before long, the peace movement would thus have three museums in eminently suitable locations for this type of propaganda: Bloch's museum in Lucerne, the Carnegie foundation in the Hague, and Gurowski's museum in Nice. He consequently, and without qualms, demanded that the question of Gurowski's involvement in the Lucerne project be adjourned<sup>39</sup>.

It had now become clear that Gurowski had not so much overcommitted himself financially as revealed the real motive for his initial involvement in the Lucerne museum: it had to promote the name and honour of its benefactor-perpetuator as much as the cause of peace. His was not the disinterested and committed attitude of a Bloch, but rather the opposite: his whole appearance was that of the pacifist movement's rich uncle, who wanted to be admired and applauded for his self-chosen role. In Milan, the break with Gurowski was not yet fully admitted or accepted, and the debate was concluded with the unanimous adoption of a resolution, submitted by the Committee of the Gurowski Foundation, which instructed the Bern Bureau to undertake a last amiable attempt to obtain from Gurowski the honouring of his engagements. Neither the Bureau nor the Lucerne city council were able, however, to elicit a response from Nice. Meanwhile Gurowski remained not completely silent, and he informed French newspapers of his plan to establish a peace museum in his castle. Works of art valued at two million franc were apparently to be sold for this purpose<sup>40</sup>. Papers in Nice also contained references to the

38 Zimmerli to Ducommun, 1. 9. 1906.

39 *Bulletin Officiel du 15e Congrès Universel de la Paix, tenu à Milan (15–22 sept.)*. Berne, Bureau International de la Paix, 1906, pp. 92–93.

40 There were frequent articles in the *Journal de la Corniche*, Nice, one of whose editors was



“rapacity of the Helvetian authorities”, which the Lucerne museum could not let pass unchallenged. It replied that Gurowski was either distrusting the intentions of the city of Lucerne and of the museum management, without having any cause to do so, or, more likely, was trying to explain away his breach of promise. The city council had regarded Gurowski’s word as being that of a gentleman, and having firmly built on it, the museum was now in a predicament worse than before. Gurowski’s intervention now turned out to have been a real disservice. Legal action seemed hard to avoid<sup>41</sup>.

During a meeting of the Nice Peace Society, and diplomatically spurred on by its honorary president, general Türr, Gurowski declared himself willing to submit the dispute to arbitration. But when Gobat went to Nice to organise such a procedure, Gurowski again reneged, and made an offer instead to buy for 50,000 franc museum shares, which he later also refused to make good. Gurowski thus showed himself to be, and not for the first time, a singularly inept practitioner and advocate of arbitration in his own affairs<sup>42</sup>. Albert Gobat who had taken over as secretary of the Bern Bureau after Ducommun’s death in 1906, and who had shared with him the second Nobel Peace Prize, – told the 1907 Munich Peace Congress that it would be below the dignity of the museum to deal further with “an individual to whom the notion of honour is completely foreign”. In a resolution submitted by La Fontaine, the congress “strongly blamed the unheard of attitude of the donor, as well as the devious practices employed by him to escape the realisation of his promise”<sup>43</sup>. Two valuable years had been lost due to his machinations, and by 1909 at the latest the present premises must be vacated. No time had to be lost if one wanted to guarantee the survival of the museum. The Conference appointed a Commission to discover ways and means for the maintenance of the Museum. In August, it had issued an “Appeal to the Friends of Peace”, and this was followed in October by a prospectus together with forms of application for preference shares of the museum. Another prospectus was issued on 3rd February, 1908, and again on 20th July, 1909. After the Conference, prominent figures in the peace movement and philanthropists were approached, either to sit on the Commission or to buy shares<sup>44</sup>. The city of Lucerne was willing to furnish the building-site and, in addition, half of the

Casimir. Its report on the discussions in Milan concerning the Lucerne museum was distinctly uncritical of Gurowski (issue of 30. 9. 1906). In an article entitled “Le Musée de la Paix à Nice”, *Le Courier Européen* of 9. 11. 1906 reported that the museum would be established in the castle’s former ball-room; the inauguration of the museum was expected next spring. Widely publicised was the commissioning of a marble tablet with the inscription of the name of the museum. According to one report, the statues and works of art themselves would find a place in his museum, which could then better be described as an earthquake station, because the statues would tumble in case of tremors. In what better manner could one have shrugged off Gurowski’s caprices, or summed up the scepticism with which his ideas and plans were received outside of his immediate entourage?

41 *Graf Gurowski und das Luzerner Friedensmuseum* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. VIII, Dezember 1906, pp. 234–235.

42 The reports in the *Journal de la Corniche* on 21st and 28th April, 1907 (“Le Musée de la Paix Lucerne–Nice”) painted a rosy picture of the arrangement concluded. The latter contained elements of a veritable opera buffa; the arbiter chosen was count de Valbranca, consul general of Portugal in Rome who was then residing in his villa in Montboron.

43 *Bulletin Officiel du 16e Congrès Universel de la Paix tenu à Munich* (9–14 sept. 1907). Berne, Le Comité d’Organisation du Congrès de Munich, 1908, pp. 48–51, 71.

44 See correspondence with, e.g., Richard Bartholdt (U.S. Congressman), Evans Darby, Emilie de Bloch, Edwin Ginn, John D. Rockefeller. As always, the International Peace Bureau was very actively involved in this.

remaining expenses. It was estimated that a building worthy of housing the collection would cost 400,000 franc, so that the friends of peace had to raise 200,000 francs. The museum association decided to issue priority shares of 500 franc each, which would bear a minimum dividend of three per cent per annum<sup>45</sup>. By the time the next congress met, half of the amount still had to be found.

### *Difficulties and Liquidation*

It was inevitable that in the discussions on the future of the museum the controversy over its allegedly warlike character should be raised again. There was widespread agreement during the Munich congress that the physical removal of the museum ought to coincide with a spiritual or ideological transformation too. Dr. Quidde even feared that the present museum might foster in some visitors a bellicose spirit, the opposite of what had been intended. Mrs. Mead went so far as to suggest the sale of the rich collection of war materials to an historical museum, and the use of the money to build up a veritable peace museum. These and similar critics were reminded by Dr. Zimmerli of the founder's purpose: the museum was based on his fundamental idea that "war shall bear witness against war". Moreover, the development of the museum in the last few years had entirely been in the direction propounded by the critics. In the new construction, the principal part would be given over to the peace section<sup>46</sup>. Zimmerli's rebuttal was supported by a writer in the *Friedens-Warte*, who argued that the debates in Munich had shown that the greatest damage to the museum had been caused, not by the infamous behaviour of Gurowski, but by the early death of Jean de Bloch. There followed, again, a summary of Bloch's theory, his methods and conclusions, which enabled the author to demonstrate that the proposals made in Munich were not in line with Bloch's intentions when he founded the museum<sup>47</sup>.

It appears that the original criticism that the museum's organisation showed a lack of pacifist propaganda was largely justified. The museum management acknowledged and gradually succeeded in remedying this deficiency, by adding peace sections. Thus, rather than sacrificing the "Bloch logic" of the original exhibition, they complemented it, and made its purpose more explicit and compelling. The radical transformation which was now urged by some pacifists was, however, going too far and threatened indeed to cut loose entirely the Bloch connection. But precisely this had made it "a totally original creation, without precedent", because it was the "tangible and visible manifestation" of its founder's profound original thought<sup>48</sup>. But this dispute, not so much within the peace movement as between it and the museum management, was only a factor of minor importance in the rapid decline of the museum's fortunes after the move to the Museggstrasse. Ultimately, a site had been bought there for 50,000 franc, and a building constructed for 200,000

45 *Official Report of the 17th Universal Congress of Peace ... London* (27 July-1 August 1908). London, The National Council of Peace Societies, 1909, pp. 97-98, 137. See also the various financial documents issued by the Museum, mentioned already.

46 *Bulletin ... Munich, o.c.*, pp. 50-51.

47 *Einige Bemerkungen zu der Diskussion über das Internationale Kriegs- und Friedensmuseum in Luzern* in: *Die Friedens-Warte*, vol. X, Januar 1908, p. 20.

48 Bertha von Suttner, *o.c.*, p. 23.

franc. The funds had been scraped together from various sides: there had been an emission of priority shares, amounting to 70,000 franc, and 80,000 franc had been secured through a hypothecary loan. The Bloch family agreed to convert its debentures of 70,000 franc, still dating from the museum's foundation, into ordinary shares, whereas some money from the Bloch Foundation<sup>49</sup> was also used for financing the new building. Following the death of Gurowski, the museum had, finally, succeeded in receiving 60,000 franc in compensation for his original promise and legal commitments.

The new museum was quietly opened on 15 July 1910; in the preceding year there had even been reports that the museum was about to disappear, owing to lack of funds<sup>50</sup>. In 1910 only 18,000 visitors were counted, but their number steadily increased over the next few years, until it reached a height of 37,000 in the year before the outbreak of the War. This was considerably less than what one had been accustomed to. The rapid decline which set in during the war was reflected in the financial situation too. By 1917 there was a loss of 30,000 franc, and it became clear that further exploration was no longer feasible. In 1919 the estate was sold to the city. The proceeds of the sale of exhibition objects only sufficed to pay half of the priority shares. The building remained a museum for some time, namely that of arts and crafts, and then became a schoolhouse. The Museum of War and Peace had become a casualty of the Great War – the war which, in the intention of its founder, the Museum was meant to forestall, by however small a contribution – in more than one sense. It brought to a halt the flow of visitors to Lucerne, and thus further weakened the tenuous financial situation of the museum. Secondly, the realities of war pre-empted a considerable part of the museum's purpose, as no one who had lived through the agonising years of war could be impressed by a "realistic" exhibition of war – or expected to visit such a museum at all. Finally, and similarly, the association of the Lucerne Museum with the cause of "peace" may have been disadvantageous to the museum's popularity, as the post-War "peace" settlement led to scepticism and suspicion. As Bloch had predicted, the Great War engulfed Europe, and ended an era. One of the less significant of the things it swept away was the Lucerne Museum. But its conception and foundation, almost eighty years ago, ranks among the noble and noteworthy of man's endeavours for peace.

49 In his testament, Bloch had left a sum of 50,000 rubles for the propagation of his theory. The money was to be administered by the Bern Bureau, and had to be spent within the next ten years.

50 *The Lucerne Peace and War Museum* in: *The Times*, 29 March 1909, p. 10.