

Introduction

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We are proud to present the second volume of *Hygiea Internationalis*. Starting a journal in a medium that is not too well established within the humanities did not turn out to be self-perpetuating. On the one hand, we have had over 5,700 visits to the International Network for the History of Public Health (INHPH) homepage, most of them also taking a look at the first volume of the journal. We think this is a fairly good result compared with traditional ways of distributing ongoing research within the historical field. The spontaneously submitted contributions to the journal have, on the other hand, been fewer than we had hoped for. We believe that the major reason for this lack of activity from the researchers' side is that they are not used to the new medium or may feel that their results will be spread better through traditional channels. However, the last argument is most certainly wrong.

This volume contains three articles representing the great diversity of the interdisciplinary study of the history of public health. *Lucinda M. Beier* analyses interviews which give us a picture of the way public health activities were perceived by English working class families half a century ago. The results will no doubt provide food for reflection for those who are involved in public health interventions today. *Alec Ostry's* article presents the historical case of the organisation of health care in Saskatchewan, Canada, where a specific political culture was confronted with the interests and opinions of the medical profession. *Sam Willner* analyses the role of alcohol consumption as a very visible factor behind the mortality hump among middle-aged men in Sweden during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The patterns he finds for pre-industrial Sweden are, in many ways, strikingly similar to developments in parts of Eastern Europe during recent decades.

In the future, we expect a steadier stream of interesting research reports from *Hygiea Internationalis*. We believe that one way of 'breaking the ice' will be to actively encourage thematic volumes, sometimes supported by a preparatory work-

shop. The first example will consist of a report from a comparative project on the history of infant and child mortality in the Nordic countries. We are also working together with Anne-Emanuelle Birn and Marco Cueto for a volume on the history of public health in Latin America. Other themes are under preparation. The next INHPH conference in Norrköping, 6–9 September 2001, *Occupational Health and Public Health. Lessons from the Past – Challenges for the Future*, will consist of almost 100 papers from all parts of the world. As far as we know, this event will be the largest meeting on this topic thus far, joining history, sociology, medicine and other disciplines in looking at the past and the future. Many contributions will no doubt provide interesting reading at full length in the journal afterwards. In the meantime, do not forget to look for the conference on the homepage

<http://www.liu.se/tema/ohph/>

and sign up, using the special form for registration. Abstracts and a detailed program will be available on the homepage by the middle of May 2001. The support of a number of Swedish and international funds and institutions shows that the topic has priority both among scholars and people who are engaged in the practical promotion of public health.

Please note that we are using a new server, and thus have a slightly different address: <http://www.liu.se/tema/inhph/journal/>.

Still hoping that the journal will become an intellectual meeting place for the more than 300 members of INHPH and others, we kindly invite you to submit articles to the editors. You are also welcome to suggest thematic volumes.

Best wishes

Jan Sundin

Co-editor, co-ordinator of the INHPH