



EDITORIAL

Discontinuation of Print Edition

After sixty-eight volumes, the first dating back to 1956, this is the last issue of the *International Review of Social History* (IRSH) that will be published in print as well as online. In the last few years, the numbers of subscribers to the print-only or combined online and print edition have decreased rapidly, which has led to the decision to discontinue the print edition, more for environmental than financial reasons. The printing, and moreover the global transport of printed issues to subscribers contributes to the carbon footprint of the journal to such an extent that our publisher Cambridge University Press has proposed to stop printing IRSH as of volume 69.

Both the IRSH Editorial Committee and the IISH as proprietor of the journal have agreed to this, albeit somewhat reluctantly. Like all other fields of history, social and labour history have developed through a culture of scholarly publishing. For centuries, print has been the customary vehicle to communicate and discuss scholarly research findings. Historians have always been known to be bibliophiles. Nevertheless, IRSH was relatively quick to jump on the band wagon of electronic, online publication of scholarly journals. Already twenty-five years ago, Volume 43 was the first to be published online. The retro digitization of the back issues was realized within five years after that. Online publication of the journal, including its archive, has proven advantageous in many ways. It has led to an unprecedented rise in the number of institutions worldwide with access to our journal. It allows keeping track of how many times and where articles are downloaded, and, we assume, read. These data show that IRSH is now able to reach a truly global readership, an essential element in its ambition of being a leading journal in global labour history.

Going online has also helped reduce the time between submission, acceptance and publication of articles considerably. The discontinuation of the print edition also means that the traditional limit to the number of pages published per volume ceases to exist. This allows us to create even more space for cutting-edge articles in the worldwide growing fields of social and labour history. The next step will be making the journal more freely accessible, both for readers and authors. Essential for this step is to become an open access journal on the basis of a sustainable business model that does not create barriers for authors in the form of publishing fees. We are proud that our journal is published by a publisher who has taken

the initiative and necessary steps to realize such an open access model for history journals. This means that IRSH will become a full open access journal as of January 2025.

The Editorial Committee