Notes on Covid-19 and the contradictions of capital: a *Dialectical Anthropology* special symposium

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In April of 2020, during the dark and frightening early months of the Covid-19 global pandemic, before most of us were used to social life by Zoom, work life by Teams, and an increasing sense of ennui with every 100,000 deaths registered globally, the *Dialectical Anthropology* editorial collective put out a call for reflections on local experiences of the crisis in relation to the contradictions of capital. We wanted to know how our far-flung members, their networks, and those who follow us closely enough to respond to our call were experiencing and theorizing pandemic-life in the varied nation-states whose capitalist governance patterns have determined our lives and deaths during this crisis. Not knowing is always the worst situation and we wanted explanations that went beyond the sensationalist pabulum that was being offered by the international press and its politically interested owners.

It looks like we got what we asked for in this collection of 13 comments in response to a provocation we published on May 26! Sadly, we have missed whole continents and geographic regions, such as Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia, but we have covered a wide swath of the types of capitalist governance responses to the pandemic and won some sense of how to interpret them.

Nearly all of the ruling elites across the planet appear to have been caught off guard, but, as always, they are prepared to use any new crisis to advance their sanguinary interests. At the same time, we have seen an increase in social struggle in many parts of the world, both before and during the pandemic, and an equally aggressive set of governance responses and culture wars that have effectively divided working classes across the planet and impeded the fight back.

We hope that this symposium is the beginning of a fertile conversation about where all this is headed, how responses to the pandemic impact on the balance of class forces around the globe, and what future responses are emerging among the stewards of capitalist governance and their opposition in the international working class.

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In this way, we hope to make some larger sense of the world, class, labor and work in face of local and regional manifestations of Covid-19, and the contradictions of capital.

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