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Corona and Work Around the Globe, ed. by Andreas Eckert and Felicitas Hentschke (= *Work in Global and Historical Perspective*, vol. 11), Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021, 255 pp.

The Berlin-based research centre re:work, where fellows from around the world gathered to exchange ideas about the diversity of global labour relations and, in the process, shake up well-ordered certainties about the path to modernity from forced and coerced to free labour, was hit hard by the disruption of most travel connections due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Shifting debates from the seminar room to Zoom meetings not only reduced emissions but also sparked an exciting reflection on academics' forms of labour as part of current global labour history. The organizers of re:work had the great idea of capturing this introspection in an attractively designed volume whose illustrations impressively show what caught the attention of academics in the spring of 2020 – a visual world that has considerable source value on its own, much like the reports of experts in the analysis of labour relations from Argentina, Ethiopia, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Romania, Switzerland, Senegal, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who were suddenly thrown out of their routines.

The result is a wonderful panorama of the many attempts to come to terms with the

new experience of the pandemic and to short-circuit one's own biographical breaks with those in society. These reports demonstrate the insight that the virus was not the great equalizer that it initially appeared to be to some because the quarantine measures affected the poor differently than they did the rich (as, incidentally, could already be learned from the *Decamerone*). However, this should not be taken to imply a simple victimization of those positioned further down the social ladder because the most important skill in the moment of the unexpected is flexibility, and this in turn is an everyday necessity for many of those poorly paid in the informal sector – pandemic or not. At the same time, the drastic measures that restricted the movement of not just infected people raised questions about social cohesion and solidarity when, without help from others, the restrictions could not be overcome.

Such questions about social differentiation prior to the pandemic experience are the focus of the first part of the volume, with the second part focusing on a concept that achieved entirely new popularity during the pandemic: systemic relevance, that is to say, a fundamental and more or less long-term new attribution of importance to and recognition by society. The reliance on public services, spotlighted in the third part of the volume, has brought new attention to the comparison of welfare systems, leading to a search for the indicators with which to reweigh the performance of soci-

eties: caseloads and mortality rates, as well as the sense of being neglected or heeded by the state. The fourth part not only looks at youth and the particular degree and manner in which they were affected by the closure of public spaces but also asks to what extent Black Lives Matter protests are part of the experience of the Covid-19 generation. The struggles for recognition (sometimes just won) reinterpreted under Covid-19 conditions are addressed in the

fifth part, and the concluding part focuses on the changing world of work with the now popular home office.

Overall, this is an excellent volume that competently analyses a global transformation directly as it unfolds and does not wait until journalists have done their job of formulating stereotypes and narratives with historians scurrying behind to correct or at least differentiate them.

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