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Disability and History (Radical History Review, Winter 2006)

Teresa Meade, David Serlin

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The burgeoning field of disability studies has emerged as one of the most innovative and transdisciplinary areas of scholarship in recent years. This special issue of *Radical History Review* combines disability studies with radical history approaches, demonstrating how disability studies cuts across regional histories as well as familiar disciplinary categories. *Disability and History* also discloses how the ways in which we define "disability" may expose biases and limitations of a given historical moment rather than a universal truth.

Drawing on archival research and other primary materials, as well as on methods from labor history, ethnic studies, performance studies, and political biography, this special issue explores how historical forces and cultural contexts have produced disability as a constantly shifting and socially constructed concept. One essay examines how Western definitions of disability imposed during colonial rule shaped Botswanan perceptions of disability. Another looks at labor activism among blind workers in Northern Ireland in the 1930s; a third essay, drawing on previously untranslated political texts by disabled writers and activists from the Weimar era, dispels the simplistic assessment of the disabled as complacent in the face of the Nazis' rise to power. Other essays interpret U.S. radical Randolph Bourne as a philosopher of disability politics and chronicle the emergence of a disabled feminist theater practice in the 1970s and 1980s.

Contributors. Diane F. Britton, Susan Burch, Sarah E. Chinn, R. A. R. Edwards, Barbara Floyd, David Gissen, Kim Hewitt, J. Douglass Klein, Seth Koven, R. J. Lambrose, Victoria Ann Lewis, Julie Livingston, Paul K. Longmore, Robert McRuer, Teresa Meade, Paul Steven Miller, Natalia Molina, Patricia A. Murphy, Máirtín Ó Catháin, Carol Poore, Geoffrey Reaume, David Serlin, Katherine Sherwood, Ian Sutherland, Geoffrey Swan, Everett Zhang

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