

REDISCOVERING
NORMAN BETHUNE

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The contributions of the Confucius Institute at Renison University College and its Director, Yan Li, made our trip to China possible. Yan Li is tireless in her efforts to make Dr. Norman Bethune better known in Canada. She was also our guide in China and we are grateful to her for her efforts and leadership.

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如果没有中国华夏文化遗产基金会、中国出版集团、中国白求恩精神研究会、白求恩在中国项目委员会邀请我们，使我们能够参加2015年9月9日至16日在北京举行的“白求恩精神与我们的时代国际论坛”，这本《重读白求恩》的文集是不可能问世的。

我们也必须感谢所有参与支持了这次活动的单位，为我们提供了十分宝贵的机会，去观摩中国人民抗日战争纪念馆，特别是白求恩在河北的纪念馆和医院遗址。这些活动加深并拓宽了我们的视野，使我们更加理解了白求恩奉献给中国人民的英雄行为的意义。尤其难忘的，是在河北省葛公村那个小山村里，看到中国老百姓对白求恩发自内心的敬仰、还有对我们一行真挚朴素的欢迎。那种场面深深地令人感动。

滑铁卢孔子学院以及李彦院长的贡献使得我们的赴华之旅得以实现。为了使白求恩医生的英名在加拿大广为传播，李彦多年来一直在不懈地努力。她是我们在中国的向导。我们十分感谢她的辛劳和组织领导能力。

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Introduction

In the fall of 2015, a small group of Canadians were on their way to China to participate in a series of events celebrating the life of Norman Bethune. Billed as an International Forum on “Bethune’s Legacy and Our Times,” it was occurring in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of China’s victory in the war with Japan and the end of the Anti-Fascist War, known in the West as World War II.

Some of us had been to China before, and for others it was their first time. We landed at the gleaming international airport in Beijing and were whisked into the city on a modern, multi-laned highway past impressive high-rises. It is an amazingly modern city with Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City of Imperial China at its centre.

I had been to China in 2012 with Yan Li, the head of the Confucian Institute at Renison University College. Then, I was surprised to discover a very modern China, and I imagine those in our group coming for the first time had a similar surprise.

Our hosts had arranged for us to visit various sites of importance for Bethune in China. The sites included museums, memorials, the Great Wall, and, I was especially looking forward to the promised visit to the Wutai Mountains southwest of Beijing. It was here that Norman Bethune joined the Communist led Eighth-Route Army, established a hospital, performed innumerable surgeries under difficult circumstances, trained villagers as doctors and nurses, and died after less than two years in China. Everyone in our group had their own hopes and expectations.

It is commonplace on the streets of Beijing for people to ask, “Where are you from? Or simply, “what country?” If you say, “from Canada,” the response is “Oh, from Canada. Norman Bethune.” Their faces light up! An exchange would follow. I wondered if others would have the same experience.

We were a varied crew. Our small group included the novelist Dennis Bock, author of *The Communist's Daughter*, Margaret Loewen Reimer, a writer and long-time editor at the *Mennonite Reporter*, John Moore, a specialist in medical technology, Joshua Fletcher Marsh, an aspiring actor from Vancouver, Yan Li, the Director of the Confucius Institute at Renison and Darrol Bryant, Director the Centre for Dialogue and Spirituality in the World Religions. At the heart of our group was Bill Smith who was carrying with him the only known photograph of Mao Zedong and Norman Bethune. Yan Li's contribution to this volume entitled *Things Left to Lilian*, tells the remarkable story of this rare photo – how it came to be in Bill Smith's possession and how it now came back to China.

Arriving in China is always an event, but even more so this time. We had cleared customs and immigration when someone noticed that Bill was not with us. I said he must be behind us and I would go back to get him. I somehow managed to persuade the guard to let me back into the secure area. There Bill was trying to explain to the customs officials why he was traveling with two ceremonial swords, a meter to a meter and a half long wrapped in a rug secured with duct-tape. He said that Canadian customs in Toronto had allowed him to take them on the plane as carry-on baggage. I joined the chatter not knowing any Chinese, but speaking in a slow and deliberate way, hoping I might be understood. Fortunately, Yan Li's husband came to explain in Chinese. Somehow, Bill was allowed to proceed. Soon we were all, swords included, in taxis and on our way into Beijing.

During the days prior to the Forum on Bethune, we visited museums celebrating the end of the war with the Japanese, had discussions with Chinese writers, and saw memorials to Bethune. After the Forum, we visited the villages in the Wutai Mountains where Bethune served until his death. Our visit to the war museum was striking for the number of paintings – propaganda art – featuring a heroic Norman Bethune, some side by side with Mao Zedong. The museum was well designed and filled with visitors – school children and ordi-

nary citizens.

The visit to the China Writers Association was especially fascinating. It is devoted to encouraging writing across the many ethnic communities that make up China. Their program brings in writers for three months, on scholarships that cover all costs, for seminars and opportunities for writers to meet and learn from one another.

After three days in Beijing, we headed to Hebei and the Bethune sites. We travelled by bus along with some of our Chinese hosts. We were treated royally, staying in a Guest Hotel in Hebei that was simply grand, as was the food. We visited the Bethune museum and the following morning headed deeper into the beautiful Wutai Mountains. Initially on a four-lane highway, we turned on to a smaller two-lane to the village, Gegongzhuang, where Bethune's hospital was located. Our arrival prompted interest among the local villagers who shyly watched us walk through the village to Bethune's hospital. The hospital had been reconstructed on the original plans after the war. I was struck by how small the structures were surrounding the inner courtyard. I had to duck to enter the rooms and then could barely stand up straight. It was very moving to be here and to imagine Bethune at work.

We continued further up the hill to the Bethune memorial, past a graveyard where hundreds of soldiers who had died during the war are buried. I was not prepared to be so moved as the large image of Bethune came into view. We all became silent as we paused, and slowly made our way around the memorial. Nearby was another memorial, this time to an Indian doctor, who had, like Bethune, come to China and died there.

As we walked back towards our bus, we engaged some of the villagers who were still watching these invading foreigners. They were friendly and curious. We stopped to exchange nods and smiles.

Later, we visited Xibaipo the site where Mao and his generals gathered towards the end of the war to prepare plans for remaking China. We visited Mao's modest room: a single bed with a little wash stand. It was again interesting to visit with

guides and other visitors to this site.

The next day we headed back to Beijing where we visited the Summer Palace. Now known as the Ruined Palace, it was constructed in the mid-1700s by European powers for the Chinese Emperor and included many European style structures. During the Second Opium War (1860-1864), it was blown-up and burned by British and French forces. It was a haunting place to experience.

It was now time for the Forum, held in the Golden Hall of the Beijing Hotel, located just off Tiananmen Square. The Beijing Hotel is actually three hotels now linked to one another. The middle section is the Raffles Beijing Hotel and when I wandered in the concierge told me that this was where Mao used to come to dance. We were sent next door to a huge auditorium which contained a Bethune exposition that extended along two walls. It included pictures of Bethune from Canada, Spain, and China, including reproductions of the picture that Bill Smith would now officially present to China. There was a buzz as the auditorium filled. We were seated near the front, and in the row in front of us and to our right sat, we were told, Mao's daughter. There were many speeches before Yan Li's turn to speak. She briefly recited the story that led to her meeting Bill Smith and his offering to China the picture of Bethune with Mao. Bill then came on stage holding the photo, now in a frame, to a thunderous ovation. It continued as everyone rose to his or her feet.

The event ended with a rousing performance of song by a Red Army Chorus of women all in army uniforms. Afterwards, descendants of people who had lost parents/grandparents during the war surrounded Bill. Animated conversations went on for some time. It had been a successful event. Later we met with representatives of the China Cultural Heritage Foundation before returning to Canada.

We were invited to write something prior to our coming to China or to prepare a contribution for the Bethune Forum. Some of us did. Following our return to Canada, we decided to secure a few more contributions for the volume you now

hold in your hands. It contains a wide range of contributions from poems to personal reflections, from scholarly papers to challenging perspectives on Norman Bethune in Canada and in China.

II.

The volume opens with a poem by Judith Maclean Miller entitled *Norman...Bethune...* An author, scholar, and Professor Emerita of English specializing in Canadian Literature at Renison University College, Judith has long known of Norman Bethune from stories that circulated in her family while growing up in Montreal. Her poem captures something of the mystery and questions that still surround Bethune. It sets a tone for what follows.

It is followed by two pieces by Margaret Loewen Reimer, a writer and long-time editor for the *Mennonite Reporter*. The first piece, *Norman Bethune: A Man of Destiny*, recounts what she learned of Bethune prior to her going to China. The second piece, *Ceremonial Sword Sets the Stage*, recounts something of what she learned of Bethune while in China and after. Taken together, they give the reader a glimpse of what might happen to one's view of Bethune when a Canadian encounters the Chinese view of Bethune. Two other contributions included here offer a glimpse of what happens when this encounter is reversed.

Marc St-Pierre, a young graduate student at Laval, picks up these issues in his *Hero in China, Not so Much in Canada*. It recounts Bethune's journey to China and his actions there that led to Mao's tribute to Bethune. It is the story of the making of a hero. He contrasts this with the Canadian story. Canadians either ignored Bethune or opposed him from the 1930s until the late 1960s. St-Pierre interestingly notes the differences in attitude between French and English Canadians. Bethune's place in Canadian culture began to shift when Pierre Elliot Trudeau became the Prime Minister. In the early 1970s, Bethune was

designated a person of national interest. Moreover, St-Pierre notes, his reputation has continued to grow down to the present day.

David Lethbridge is a retired Professor of Psychology who has written extensively on Bethune. Here he contributes two pieces to the Bethune puzzle. In *This Will Be My Name*, he focuses on Bethune's relationship to his grandfather. In *Wounded in Love*, it is Bethune's relationship to his mother that is central. Lethbridge presents a dysfunctional household in which Bethune is psychologically wounded, Lethbridge argues, by an overly rigid, fundamentalist mother. He takes refuge in the embracing arms of his grandfather and finally takes his grandfather's name, Norman, as his own. Lethbridge challenges more bucolic views of Bethune's family and provides important perspectives on relationships that shaped Bethune's life.

One of the lingering questions surrounding Norman Bethune is his relationship with women, both in the West and in China. Larry Hannant, an adjunct history professor at the University of Victoria, an award-winning author for his *Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune's Writing and Art* and a web creator, takes up this challenging issue. In *I'm Not Your Man, Bethune and Women*, Hannant challenges the oft-repeated charge of Bethune being a womanizer. He carefully and critically examines those charges against Bethune, beginning with the first biography of Bethune, *The Scalpel & the Sword* (1950). It is found wanting, as is the first film on Bethune, *The Making of a Hero*. Most impressive is Hannant's examination of what women – some of whom Bethune knew in Montreal and those he knew in China – said about Bethune.

Some months after our group returned from China, one of the editors came across an essay entitled *The Bethune Health Group* written by Libbie Park, a nurse mentioned in Larry Hannant's essay. Libbie Park had just completed her nursing program at Montreal General Hospital when she met Bethune in 1935. Her account written many years later gives us a contemporary's view of this chapter in Bethune's life. Though the essay was discovered late in the process that led to this volume,

we felt it worth “stopping the presses” to include the voice of someone who participated in Bethune’s efforts to influence health care in Montreal and Quebec during the Great Depression.

Park notes that the Bethune Health Group was not only a group of doctors but included a range of health care professionals – nurses, dentists, social workers as well as doctors. The group was not large – Park says 20 at most – but all were deeply concerned to bring health care to the needy. She notes that Quebec had 12% of Canada’s total population and 28% of the unemployed, a disproportionate number that were not well served by the health care system. Bethune was at the heart of the group with his call to action. He had long argued that health care was not only for the rich. The group released its proposals just as a provincial election was underway. Their efforts did not significantly affect the election of 1935 that brought Maurice Duplessis to power – but the group forged on even after Bethune was off to Spain in 1936.

Dennis Bock wrote a remarkable novel entitled *The Communist’s Daughter*. Unlike the earlier contributions found here, Bock takes a novelist’s approach to Bethune in his *Searching for Bethune’s Beating Heart*. His concern is neither the facts of a historian, nor heroics, but rather, Bock writes, “a glimpse into the unspoken narrative of the human heart.” That glimpse is disclosed, Bock argues, in moments of defeat and difficulty rather than in moments of great success. Bock identifies that in Bethune’s silence after his return from Spain. His novel then is a series of chapter long letters written by Bock’s imagined Bethune to a daughter that never was. What emerges is some penetrating insights into a very human Bethune.

Born in China, Yan Li immigrated to Canada in the 1980s. She had completed her MA in Journalism in Beijing and worked as a teacher, translator, and journalist before coming to Canada. Her choice of Canada was, in part, motivated by her regard for Norman Bethune. In *Things Left to Lilian*, Yan Li’s contribution to this volume, she describes Bethune as “the most perfect man in the world.” In Canada, she worked in var-

ious capacities, completed an MA in History, and published *Daughters of the Red Land* before becoming the director of the Confucius Institute at Renison University College.

In *Things Left to Lilian*, Yan Li shares her view of Bethune, his relationships with women he encountered in China, and the story of Lilian Gough and her son William “Bill” Cecil-Smith who found among his mother’s things the photo of Mao Zedong and Norman Bethune. Growing up in school in the 1960s, Yan, like students across China, memorized Mao Zedong’s tribute to Norman Bethune. It inspired a desire to know more of his story. Then in 2013, Yan Li learned of the photo of Bethune and Mao discovered by someone in London, Ontario. A 2012 article in the London Free Press led her to Bill Smith and after a few years, an arrangement was made to have the original photo brought to China. It is a great detective story.

In *A Re-Read of Bethune: Fifty Years Later*, we have a Chinese response to the return of the picture of Mao Zedong and Norman Bethune to China. It is written by Chengzhi Zhang, one of China’s most well known authors, and translated by Baimei Sun. Zhang is a Chinese Muslim of the Hui ethnic community. He writes and publishes in Chinese, Mongolian, and Japanese. His early works include *Black Steed* and, more recently, *Inner Spirit*. His *Re-Read* is striking for its enthusiasm. It also underscores the immense impact Mao’s tribute to Bethune has had on Chinese life and culture.

As mentioned above, during Bethune’s era there were other doctors from Europe, India, and North America who came to China, joined in the struggle, and lost their lives. While they too are honoured, none of them achieved the status given to Bethune. Why?

This question lurks in *Remembering Bethune*, written by M. Darrol Bryant, long-time professor of religions East and West at Renison University College. He revisits Bethune’s biography and his journey from Canada, to Europe and England, to Spain and then to China.

Throughout his journey, Bethune was always searching, challenging, demanding more of himself, often discontent, but

always seeking. It was in China that Bethune realized his destiny. He threw himself into his work; he was tireless. He performed surgeries in impossible circumstances and impossible numbers. Wounded soldiers, villagers, anyone who needed care received it. By January 1939, he was training local villagers as doctors and nurses. He instituted practices to improve sanitation and hygiene. He wrote letters begging for funds. In those letters, he spoke of his contentment, even happiness.

It all came to an end on November 12, 1939. Bethune died. The villagers hid him away and then moved his body away from the front lines to a place where he could be safely buried. In 1940, a more permanent memorial was put in place. In this process, Bryant argues, you see something very Chinese happening. Is it the transfiguration of Bethune?

These contributions provide us with some new pieces for and perspectives on the puzzle of Norman Bethune. They at once humanize Bethune while underling the significance of his transformative time in China. Perhaps they will lead us to discover anew the place of Bethune in Canada and China.

《重读白求恩》的诞生

撰文：戴罗尔·勃兰特

翻译：李彦

2015年初秋，一批加拿大人组团赴华，前往参加在那里举办的一系列纪念白求恩的活动。那次命名为“白求恩精神与我们的时代”的国际论坛，是为纪念中国人民抗日战争胜利以及西方反法西斯战争结束70周年而举办的。

我们中的某些人曾经去过中国，但对另一些人来说，则是首次到访。飞机在光洁明亮的北京国际机场降落后，我们沿着现代化的高速公路进城，道路两旁的高楼大厦鳞次栉比，绵延不绝。这座环绕着紫禁城和天安门广场所建造的现代化都市令人赞叹。

我在2012年时就跟随滑铁卢孔子学院的李彦院长去过中国。那时我就为发现了一个如此现代化的中国而深感震撼。不难想象，我们团队中首次来华的那些人会有怎样的惊讶了。

东道主为我们安排了丰富多彩的活动内容，除了参观与白求恩相关的各种博物馆之外，还有驰名世界的长城。团队中的每个人都怀揣着各自的期盼。但我尤为渴望的，是将要拜访位于北京西南方的五台山地区。正是在那里，白求恩参加了共产党领导下的八路军，建立了一所战地医院，在极其艰难困苦的环境下实施了数不清的救治手术、把普通百姓培训成医护人员，并在一年多后长眠于这块土地上。

在北京街头，往往会迎面遇到路人打探：“你是从哪儿来的？”或者仅仅是几个字，“哪国人？”如果你回答“加拿大”，立刻就会收到如下的反馈：“哦，加拿大来的啊！白求恩。”人们的目光会在瞬间发亮！随即就攀谈起来了。我很好奇，其他人是否也遇到了同样的情形呢？

我们这支小小团队的成员来自不同的领域。丹尼斯·鲍克是小说《共产党人的女儿》的作者。玛格丽特·罗文·雷默是曼依人资深记者兼编辑。约翰·摩尔是医疗研究专家。约书亚·弗雷彻·玛仕是来自温哥华的一位魅力四射的演员。李彦是滑铁卢孔子学院的院长。戴罗尔·勃兰特是世界宗教信仰对话中心的主任。团队的核心人物则是比尔·史密斯。他随身携带着迄今为止全世界发现的独一无二的一帧毛泽东与白求恩的合影照片。这本文集中收入了李彦的记叙文《留给丽莲的东西》。围绕着这幅珍贵照片，该文讲述了一个动人的故事：比尔·史密斯是怎样获得这帧照片以及照片最后是如何送回中国的。

这次赴华旅行与以往一样，也是横生波折。大家都完成安检并入关之后，却发现比尔·史密斯不见了。我猜想，他一定是落在后面了，便说服了安检人员，允许我重新返回，去寻找比尔。果然，比尔正在费力地向安检人员解释他想携带入关的那些东西。那是两柄长达一米半的军队出征时使用的仪仗剑，用布条、泡沫塑料、胶带严严实实地缠裹成一大包。他说，加拿大航班允许他随身携带这件特殊的行李登上了飞机。我加入了谈话。虽然不会说中文，但我尽量放慢了语速，以期对

方能够听懂。幸好，李彦的先生及时出现，才用中文解了围。比尔终于顺利入关了。很快，我们的团队就携带着所有行囊，包括那两柄长剑，登上了出租车，朝北京驰去。

在白求恩精神国际论坛召开之前，我们先参观了卢沟桥的抗日战争纪念馆，并与中国作家协会的人员交流座谈。论坛结束之后，我们便到太行山脉东麓，去寻访白求恩战斗到生命最后一刻的那些村落。

卢沟桥抗日战争纪念馆中悬挂着的许多大幅宣传画令人耳目一新，突出地刻画了白求恩的英雄形象，有些画作展示了他与毛泽东并肩而行。这座纪念馆的设计堪称完美。里面游客云集。有少年儿童，也有普通民众。

参观中国作家协会的现代文学纪念馆和鲁迅文学院时，所见所闻十分吸引人。中国作家协会致力于鼓励全中国各民族作家的文学创作活动。其项目之一是为作家提供奖学金，进行为期三个月的培训，所有费用全免，为作家们提供专业进修和互相交流的机会。

在北京逗留了三日之后，我们就乘坐一辆大巴前往河北省，去寻访白求恩遗址。东道主对我们的接待极为热情。我们在石家庄下榻于一家堪称豪华的宾馆，享受了美味佳肴。参观了当地的白求恩纪念馆之后，第二天清晨我们就驱车进入了风景优美的太行山区。大巴起初行驶在宽阔的高速公路上，但逐渐转入只有两条车道的狭窄公路，前往葛公村，去寻访白求恩建立的医院遗址。

我们的到来引起村民极大的兴趣。他们羞怯地悄

悄观望，盯着我们穿越村巷，来到白求恩的医院。这所医院是战后复原重建的。但我惊讶地发现，被土墙围绕的院落中那几座房舍竟然如此低矮、简陋、狭小。我必须低头弯腰，才能进入房门，进屋后，也几乎无法伸直腰板。能够身临其境地体验白求恩当年的工作与生活环境，令我深受感动。

我们继续往大山深处行走，经过埋葬着数百名抗日烈士的陵园，最终来到了白求恩墓前。当那座高大的汉白玉雕像猛然间落入我眼帘时，我激动得浑身颤栗。大家都止住了脚步，鸦雀无声。片刻后，众人才开始环绕着坟冢，默默致哀。旁边矗立着另一座坟冢，那里埋葬着印度医生柯棣华。他与白求恩一样，来到中国并长眠于这块土地上。

当我们离开陵园，返回大巴时，才终于有机会和那些一直好奇地观望我们这些不速之客的村民们微笑致意，挥手道别。

第二天清晨，我们参观了西柏坡。毛泽东和他的战友们在战争末期曾居住于此，酝酿改造中国的宏图大业。我们参观了毛居住过的简陋小屋。里面仅有一张单人床，一个小小的木质脸盆架。这里同样游客如织。有幸与其他中国人一起浏览这些地方，实为乐事。

回到北京后，我们游览了圆明园。这片建于18世纪的皇家园林中，有一部分是欧洲人为中国皇帝设计的西洋式建筑。但在第二次鸦片战争中，整个宫殿群被英法联军焚毁、破坏。穿行于废墟间，令人感到毛骨悚然。

国际论坛是在天安门广场东边北京饭店的金色大

厅里举行的。饭店由三幢毗连的高楼组成。中间那栋是久负盛名的莱弗士酒店。我在大堂里闲逛时，门房告诉我，毛泽东曾经来这里跳过舞。

我们被引入旁边一间宽阔雄伟的大厅。两边陈列着白求恩生平图片展，从他在加拿大到西班牙、最后到中国的生活道路，可谓应有尽有，也包括比尔·史密斯拥有的那张珍贵照片的复印件。大厅里人潮涌动。我们的团队被安排在前排就座。人们告诉我，坐在侧前方的那个人，就是毛泽东的女儿李敏。

许多人讲话之后，轮到了李彦发言。她简要地介绍了是如何发现比尔·史密斯这张毛泽东与白求恩合影照片的过程，并宣布了比尔把这张珍贵的历史照片捐赠给中国的决定。在雷鸣般的掌声中，比尔登上舞台，高举镶嵌在镜框中的照片。全场来宾无论男女，不约而同地从座位上起立，争睹这一激动人心的时刻。

论坛的压轴戏是一批身着军装的女性热情洋溢地表演红军时代的大合唱。散会之后，红二代们涌上前来，将比尔团团围住，兴致勃勃地聊了好一阵子。活动非常成功。

我们在返回加拿大之前，还专程到“中国华夏文化遗产基金会”举行了座谈。

来华之前，我们每个人都应邀为白求恩国际论坛递交一篇论文。有些人写了。回到加拿大之后，我们最终决定编辑出版一本文集，就是此刻捧在你们手中的《重读白求恩》。这本文集内容广泛，有诗歌、散文，也有颇具挑战论点的学术论文，均涉及到白求恩在加拿大和中国的生活道路。

文集的头一篇是茱蒂丝·麦克琳·米勒创作的一首诗“诺尔曼·白求恩”。作者是瑞纳森大学荣休教授，专治加拿大文学。她出生成长于蒙特利尔市，自幼便从亲友口中聆听到有关白求恩的各种故事。这首诗紧扣着迄今萦绕在白求恩周围的一些神秘话题。该诗为后面的所有作品奠定了基调。

接下来的两篇文章来自玛格丽特·罗文·雷默。她是一位作家，长期担任《曼依人记者报》主编。第一篇“追寻使命者—白求恩”记叙了她在赴华之前所听说过的白求恩。第二篇“仪仗剑装饰的舞台”则记叙了她在在中国时以及离开中国之后所了解到的白求恩。将这两篇文章放在一起阅读，可令读者看到，当一个加拿大人知晓了中国人对白求恩所持的态度之后，将会产生什么样的结果。本集中的另外两篇文章则让读者了解到，当中国人知晓了加拿大人对白求恩所持的态度时，又将是怎样的情形。

马克·圣皮埃尔是拉瓦尔大学一名年轻的研究生。他在自己的文章“在中国是英雄，在加拿大则不然”中，探讨了此类问题。该文记叙了白求恩赴华后的事迹，由此引发毛泽东的高度赞扬并将其树立为英雄典范。然后，他对比了白求恩在加拿大时的故事。从1930至1960年代末期，加拿大人要么忽视他，要么反对他。圣皮埃尔饶有兴趣地注意到加拿大法裔及英裔族群对白求恩态度的不同之处。自从皮埃尔·特鲁多成为加拿大总理之后，白求恩在加拿大文化中的地位才开始转变。1970年代初期，白求恩被定义为与国家利益相关之人士。从那时起，他的影响持续扩展，直至今日。

大卫·莱斯布里奇是一位退休的心理学教授。他撰写过多篇白求恩专著。他为本集贡献了两篇解读白求恩之谜的文章。“这将成为我的名字”一文叙述了白求恩与他祖父的关系。“在爱中受伤”一文的核心则是白求恩与其母亲的关系。莱斯布里奇展示给读者的，是一个带有缺陷的家庭环境。他认为，白求恩的母亲是一个过于死板固执的基督教原教旨信徒，她给白求恩带来了心理伤害。白求恩在祖父的温暖怀抱里寻求庇护，并采用了祖父的名字诺尔曼作为自己的名字。莱斯布里奇挑战了那些认为白求恩成长于温馨和睦家庭的观点，并从家庭关系是如何塑造了白求恩一生的角度，提供了重要的参考线索。

迄今纠缠着白求恩研究的困扰之一，就是他与女性之间的关系，包括他在西方以及在中国的那些岁月。拉瑞·汉纳特是维多利亚大学历史系的兼职教授，著有获奖作品《激情政治：白求恩的写作与艺术》。在他的文章“我不是你的男人——白求恩与女性”中，汉纳特批评了那些不厌其烦地指责白求恩追逐女性的看法。从1950年出版的第一部白求恩传记《手术刀是利剑》开始，他对这些指责一一进行了严谨的分析批评。加拿大拍摄的第一部关于白求恩的影片《一个英雄的成长》中，这方面的表现也同样令人不满。给读者留下深刻印象的是汉纳特对女性如何评价白求恩所作的那些分析。她们中的一些人是白求恩在蒙特利尔和中国时所认识的。

我们的团队从中国返回加拿大几个月之后，本书的一位编辑偶然读到了一篇文章《白求恩创立的医疗改

善组织》。文章作者叫丽碧·帕克。她就是拉瑞·汉纳特在他的文章中所提到的那位加拿大护士。1935年，丽碧·帕克刚刚完成了她在蒙特利尔总医院的护士培训课程，就遇到了白求恩。多年后，她撰写了这篇文章，从当事人的角度为我们提供了对白求恩那段岁月的观察。虽然发现她这篇文章的时间稍微晚了些，但我们认为，还是值得推迟这本书的出版进程，而把一位在大萧条年代里曾经与白求恩并肩奋斗、努力改进蒙特利尔及魁北克省医疗状况的女性的声音囊括进来。

丽碧·帕克提到，白求恩发起创立的这个医疗改善组织并非只有医生参加，其中还包括了不少专业医疗人士，有护士、牙医、社会工作者等等。这个组织并不大。据她说，顶多就是二十个人。但每个人都深信不移，应当为贫困者提供医疗保健服务。她提到，当时魁省的人口仅占全国12%，但其失业率却占全国的28%，而医疗保健系统对他们所提供的服务是不成比例的。这个组织的核心人物就是白求恩。他长期以来一直呼吁，医疗服务不应当仅仅是为富人提供的。正当省里进行大选之时，这个组织发布了他们的倡议。虽然他们的努力未能对1935年的选举产生巨大影响，但是，白求恩在1936年奔赴西班牙之后，该组织仍然坚持了继续战斗。

丹尼斯·鲍克创作过一部极为出色的小说《共产党人的女儿》。鲍克的文章“探索白求恩跳动的心房”与前面其他几位不同，是以小说家的手法引领读者进行思考的。他所关注的，既非史学家们所在意的历史真实，也非英雄豪杰之情，而是“对未能表白的心声的一窥”。鲍克认为，这一窥的曝光，是在一个人陷入失败

与困境之时，而非狂欢伟大胜利的时刻。白求恩从西班牙战场返回加拿大之后曾有个阶段陷入了沉默，鲍克就此挖掘了他内心深处的世界。他那部小说采用连篇累牍的长信形式，虚构了白求恩写信给他从未谋面的女儿，以极具穿透的洞察力，展示出一个富有人情味的白求恩。

李彦在中国出生长大，八十年代移居加拿大。她在北京时获得过新闻学硕士学位，曾从事过教学、翻译、新闻采编等工作。对白求恩的崇拜是她选择来加拿大的原因之一。本集选入了她的记叙文《留给丽莲的东西》。在文中，她将白求恩形容为“世界上最完美的男性”^②她在加拿大从事过不同工作，发表过英文小说《红浮萍》和《雪百合》，并成为滑铁卢孔子学院的院长。

在“留给丽莲的东西”中，李彦与读者分享了她对白求恩的看法、描述了白求恩与他在中国遇到的女性的关系、丽莲·古治和她儿子比尔·史密斯的故事，以及比尔是如何在母亲遗物中发现那帧白求恩与毛泽东合影照片的。李彦和她的同时代中国人一样，是背诵着毛泽东的《纪念白求恩》长大的，也因此激发了她渴望深入了解这位英雄的故事。2013年，李彦获悉，白求恩与毛泽东合影的照片藏于安大略省某人手中。她历经波折寻找到了比尔·史密斯。数年之后，她才铺平道路，成功地把这帧照片原物带到了中国。这是一个十分优秀的侦探故事。

在“五十年再读白求恩”中，我们看到了一个中国人对白求恩与毛泽东合影照片回归中国一事所产生的反馈。作者是中国最著名的作家之一张承志。他是中国

回族人，用中文、蒙文和日文均发表过作品。他早期的作品包括《黑骏马》及《心灵史》。他这篇“再读”是由孙白梅女士翻译成英文的，通篇以洋溢的激情诠释了毛泽东那篇《纪念白求恩》的文章给中国人的生活与文化所带来的巨大影响力。

如前所述，在白求恩生活的时代，还有不少来自欧洲、印度、北美的医生也曾与中国人民并肩奋斗并献出了他们宝贵的生命。虽然他们也受到中国人民的尊敬，但却无人能企及白求恩这样崇高的地位。为什么？

对此产生的疑问隐含在戴罗尔·勃兰特撰写的“缅怀白求恩”一文中。勃兰特是瑞纳森大学东西方宗教研究领域的资深教授。他重温了白求恩的生平足迹，从加拿大、欧洲、英国、西班牙，最后抵达中国。在他整个人生旅途中，白求恩一直处于寻找、挑战、对自我提出更高要求的过程中。他常常对自己不满，但依旧不断地追寻。正是在中国，白求恩才终于完成了他的人生使命。他把自己投入不知疲倦的工作中，在极其恶劣的环境下实施了数不清的外科手术，不仅救治战场上的伤兵，也救治所有需要帮助的村民百姓。1939年初，他把普通中国人培训成医护人员，并建立了一系列改善医疗卫生条件的规章措施。他接连不断地给各方频频写信，乞求资金赞助。在这些信件里，他谈到了自己巨大的满足与欣慰。

所有这一切，都在1939年11月12日这一天画上了休止符。白求恩与世长辞了。村民们掩藏起他的尸体，然后又将其转移到远离前线战火的安全地带埋葬。直到1940年才举行了一场更为庄严的葬礼。勃兰特认为，

在这一过程中，人们观察到某种中国特色的东西正在形成。也许，这就是白求恩被圣洁化的过程？

本集中的文章为我们理解围绕着白求恩的那些谜团提供了一些新鲜的观察角度。文章作者们在为白求恩赋予人情味的同时，也诠释了他在中国大地上完成人生重要转折的深远意义。也许，他们将引领大家去发现白求恩留在加拿大与中国的更多的印记。

2017年11 20日
加拿大滑铁卢

Bethune . . . Norman . . .

Judith Maclean Miller

you who were such a treat
for the women of Montreal
and maybe of other places too . . .

you were a presence long after you died,
in the halls of McGill
and among artists in that city of grace
of Leonard Cohen
of Irving Layton
of that beautiful woman you met on Mount Royal
and of nursing sisters.

i know
you gave all of yourself
to the soldiers of China
deep in the hills
and faraway from
anything like medicine.

for a long time
i thought you should have been
more cautious
more self-protective.

now I understand better.

there were no half-way measures for you.

you never considered them.
you never gave them a thought.

and it still matters to me that you wrote
"The role of the artist is to disturb,"

as you did
and as you still do
and i thank you.

Norman Bethune: Man of Destiny

Margaret Loewen Reimer

Although I had heard of Norman Bethune, I knew very little about him before the summer of 2015. In preparation for this trip to China, I read several biographies and other writings, and watched a documentary film on his life in China, and I found out what an unusual and amazing man he really was. Truly one of a kind. Three things in particular made an impression on me.¹

I.

I was intrigued by how Bethune's religious upbringing helped shape his strong sense of destiny. His family were Presbyterians, a Christian group with a belief that certain people are specifically chosen by God (predestined to be among the elect of God). Bethune believed he was destined for great things; he had a strong sense of being called to make a difference in the world, and I believe this was nurtured by his early exposure to a certain kind of religious fervour. Although he rejected his parents' faith, he had a kind of "missionary zeal" expressed in secular/social terms, and like a religious martyr, he was willing to die for what he believed in.

II.

I was struck by how Bethune's social conscience was already

¹ The following books on Norman Bethune were read in preparation for the trip to China: *Phoenix: The Life of Norman Bethune*, Roderick & Sharon Stewart (McGill-Queens, 2011), *Norman Bethune*, Adrienne Clarkson (Penguin, 2009), *The Scalpel, The Sword*, Ted Allan & Sydney Gordon (Dundurn, 2009, first ed. 1952), and *The Communist's Daughter*, Dennis Bock (HarperCollins, 2006). Novel.

evident as a teenager. Right after high school, he worked for a year at a lumber camp in northern Ontario. While a medical student, he took time off to work with a program called Frontier College – he would work in the lumber camps during the day and teach reading and writing in the evening to fellow workers, many of whom were immigrants (up to 70% were illiterate). Workers lived in appalling conditions and were forced to work extremely hard.

One biographer said: “Through Frontier College, [Bethune] worked for improved living conditions, social welfare, and education, and he found a way to deliver that message through the labourer-teacher.”² Bethune thrived on the combination of hard work and teaching, and improving the lives of his fellow workers. This program was a kind of laboratory for his emerging ideas on society and medical care.

III.

A third thing that struck me was how the Great Depression of the 1930s influenced Bethune. After becoming established as a surgeon and professor at McGill University in the 1920s, Bethune’s sense of destiny changed direction when he saw the terrible effects of the Depression. Making money and gaining a reputation were no longer his main concerns. All around him he saw desperately poor, sick and undernourished people who couldn’t afford food, never mind medical care. He saw how “cold” capitalism could be when economic health took precedence over the health of citizens. Bethune became a passionate advocate for radical reform of medical care and health services in Canada.

In one of his memorable statements he said: “Medicine, as we are practising it, is a luxury trade.... Let us take the profit, the private economic profit, out of medicine, and purify our profession of rapacious individualism.... Let us say to the people not ‘How much have you got?’ but ‘How best can we serve

² See A. Clarckson, *Norman Bethune*, op cit. p. 41

you?" We Canadians forget that Bethune was a true pioneer of socialized medicine in Canada, which came into effect in the 1960s.

Later, of course, Bethune felt that he found his real calling working alongside those fighting fascism and foreign occupation in Spain and in China. It was in China where he seems to have found his true destiny.

Ceremonial Sword Sets the Stage

Margaret Loewen Reimer

It was an unexpected invitation – to join a writers’ group in a visit to China – and I knew that the trip too would be defined by the unexpected. I had never been to China, although I had travelled in Southeast Asia many years ago. The two-week trip offered a feast of impressions, with surprises lurking in every corner.

The stage was set at the Beijing airport when I saw a member of our group walk through security with a ceremonial sword – not the usual carry-on luggage. After checking into the hotel, I was taken aback when the first people I met happened to be from my home town. The rest of the trip continued that disorienting but delightful clash of foreign and familiar, ancient and contemporary, inspiring and disturbing. Our Canadian group was not without its own exotic mix – novelist, religion professor, actor, medical scientist, editor, heir to Bethune treasures – led by a Chinese-Canadian who has a talent for diversity. The second week saw the addition of five more Canadians from various walks of life.

Beijing provided an exhilarating panorama of contrasts: streets choked with exhaust fumes from seething traffic but lined with flowering shrubs and lush gardens; towering hotels and office buildings next to quaint alleyways and ancient temples; the lively English bookstore in the middle of Beijing; solar panels on rural mountainsides. What a surprise to see our faces on huge posters at a meeting where lengthy speechmaking included a Mao impersonator and ended with selections from the Peking Opera. I was amazed at how much one can learn just wandering through a museum or visiting a famous tourist site. And the food offered its own surprises, with always more than we could possibly eat.

My biggest surprise was discovering China's Norman Bethune. I was vaguely aware of Bethune's story and had read a few books about him before the trip, but I had no idea of his place of honour in China's pantheon of revolutionary heroes. I was awestruck by the imposing memorials, museum exhibits, and art works dedicated to this Canadian, by the many hospitals and institutions named after him. I didn't know that school textbooks include Mao's tribute to Bethune, praising his "spirit of internationalism" and "absolute selflessness". For me to be a special guest, by virtue of being a Canadian, at the international celebration of Bethune's legacy was a humbling experience.

My favourite moment of the China visit was the walk at dusk through the village of Gegongzhuang to see the remains of the hospital compound where Bethune served. The isolation and deprivation under which he laboured became a little more real as we stood there in the gathering darkness.

Canadian connections

Preparing for this article drew to me to Canadians associated with Bethune. I found a few articles on Jean Ewen, the Canadian nurse who worked with Bethune, but few of us know her story. Ewen had been a nurse in China for five years in the early 1930s, and she returned with Bethune in 1938 as his assistant and translator (she recalled translating during the meeting between Bethune and Mao). But her fiercely independent nature soon clashed with Bethune's and she left him abruptly after a few months. Ewen's account of leaving Bethune differs considerably from his version.¹ Despite their differences, however, she always spoke highly of Bethune as a great doctor and humanitarian.

Ewen continued to serve with Mao's army until May of 1939, nursing the wounded, training nurses and "barefoot doctors", and teaching sanitation. The Chinese government awarded her its prestigious Silver Shield for her service. One

¹ Jean Ewen wrote a memoir entitled *China Nurse 1932-1939: A Young Canadian Witnesses History*, McClelland & Stewart, 1981.

reason for returning to Canada in 1939 may have been that she was pregnant – she never identified the father of her child.²

Jean Ewen died in Canada in 1987 but asked that her ashes be returned to China. She is buried near Bethune's statue in the Martyrs' Cemetery in Juncheng. When her daughter Laura saw how close her burial place was to Bethune's statue, she said: "I don't think Mother would like this." But another family member replied that Ewen would just say, "Move over Norman, I'm back!"³

Another memorable figure in China during the Sino-Japanese War period was Eric Liddell, a Scotsman with Canadian connections. Known primarily for his Olympic prowess, Liddell was born to missionary parents in China and returned to that country as a missionary and teacher in 1925. There he married a Canadian, Florence Mackenzie, also of missionary parentage. In 1941, with life becoming increasingly dangerous because of Japanese aggression, Florence and the children left for Canada while Liddell joined his brother, a physician, at an impoverished rural station. In 1943, Liddell was interned in a Japanese camp. While ill himself, he became a leader at the camp, organizing games and trying to keep up the spirits of the inmates. Liddell died in the camp of a brain tumour in February 1945 at the age of 43. In 1991, Edinburgh University erected a memorial at the former camp site, now in the city of Weifang. The Episcopal Church (USA) remembers Liddell with a feast day on February 22. Liddell's family lives in Canada.

I discovered a family connection to Bethune in the person of Vancouver's current mayor, Gregor Angus Bethune Robertson, whose grandmother was Norman Bethune's cousin. Bethune was so much a part of family lore, says Robertson, that he intended to become a physician himself but ended up in politics instead. He has been to China several times – in 2010 he visited the Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery in Shijiazhuang where Bethune is memorialized. Robertson's current partner

² See the excellent article on "China Nurse Jean Ewen: Embracing and Abandoning Communist Revolutionaries," by Sonya Grypma in *Journal of Historical Biography*, Vol. 9, Spring 2011.

³ Quoted in Ruth Wright Millar, *Saskatchewan Heroes & Rogues*, Coteau Books, 2004.

is singer-songwriter Wanting Qu, born in Harbin, China, and now a tourism ambassador for Chinese visitors to Canada.

While Bethune is not as well known in Canada as in China, one can find a number of films and books about him. In 1964, the National Film Board made a documentary entitled *Bethune*. Canadian-born actor Donald Sutherland played Bethune in a television show called *Witness to Yesterday* (1974-75), and in two movies: *Bethune* (1977) and *Bethune: The Making of a Hero* (1990). When I asked my local librarian why they didn't carry this 1990 film about such a remarkable Canadian, she admitted she had never heard of Bethune. In 2006, Canadian actor Trevor Hayes played Bethune in a 20-part series for Chinese television filmed in Canada and China. Literary works include Ken Mitchell's one-man play, *Gone The Burning Sun* (1991), about Bethune's time in China, and Dennis Bock's 2006 novel, *The Communist's Daughter*.

Probably the most prolific writer on Bethune in Canada is Roderick Stewart. His works include a definitive biography with co-author Sharon Stewart: *Phoenix: The Life of Norman Bethune* (2011). The other major biography is *The Scalpel, the Sword: The Story of Dr. Norman Bethune* by Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon (1952, revised 1989). Adrienne Clarkson, a Chinese-Canadian, wrote a biography of Bethune for Penguin Canada's Extraordinary Canadians series, with a companion documentary "Adrienne Clarkson on Norman Bethune" on YouTube.

Bethune's childhood home in Gravenhurst, Ontario, is now a National Historic Site of Canada with many visitors each year. A college and high school in Ontario carry his name, and his statue can be found in a Montreal public square. In March 1990, the centenary of Bethune's birth, Canada and China each issued two postage stamps in his honour. In 1998, Bethune was (finally) inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. In 2004, viewers of a CBC program on great Canadians voted Norman Bethune the 26th Greatest Canadian in our history.

Hero in China, not so much in Canada

Marc St-Pierre

The story of Norman Bethune didn't end with his death in November 1939. There is also the interesting story of his legacy. Studying the history of Bethune's legacy gives us an understanding of the process by which someone becomes a hero. It is often less about the actions of the man or woman, and more about the story that is built up around him or her. The social context in which the heroic actions took place also influences whether or not the person is considered a hero or remains an unknown person. For example, an artist who is unknown during his lifetime can become a star after his death, when society's tastes in arts have evolved. The case of Norman Bethune offers a vivid example of how the appreciation of his story changes depending on each society's contexts. We cannot ignore the extraordinary praise he received in China. On the contrary, in Canada, the country where he was born and where he lived most of his years, he received rather little attention. Why? This is what I intend to clarify.

On the winning side of history

When Bethune died on the November 12, 1939, Red China shed many tears. The Canadian doctor was valued at the highest level by the war personnel in northern-west China. He was viewed as one of them. He shared their political views. It must have amazed the Chinese to see a foreign doctor who could have led a comfortable life in Canada coming to participate in their war, giving his skills and energy for their cause. Not only that, but he was dedicated. He worked countless hours treating Chinese soldiers and teaching village people so that they

became qualified doctors and nurses. The needs in the field of health in China were so huge that the arrival of Western doctors, especially one like Bethune, must have inspired much joy. Bethune became a much valued member of the 8th Route Army. His presence near the front lines in the war with the Japanese seems to have improved the morale of the troops. He was in China when the future was uncertain, and the present was full of dangers; it was a time when legends are made.

Bethune also received recognition from high ranking officials like General Nie Rongzhen of the 8th Route Army, and, even more importantly, from Mao Zedong, then Head of the Red Army. The latter wrote an essay about Bethune on December 21, 1939, only weeks after his death, to praise the brave doctor who gave his life in China's fight against imperialism. In Mao's tribute, Bethune is depicted as the perfect example of the altruistic internationalist. Mao urges every Chinese to emulate Bethune.

To Bethune's good fortune, the Communists ended up controlling the whole of China. In October 1949, the triumphant Red Army marched into Beijing and created the new regime, the People's Republic of China. This meant that Bethune found himself on the winning side of history. Then, gradually, all China learned about the foreign hero's achievements. Later, during the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao decided to use the example of Bethune in his efforts to change the mentality of the Chinese people. He sought to have the Chinese people reject old heroes and adopt new ones. Communism needed altruistic humans to function well, and Mao found that Bethune was the best example he could give to the Chinese people. Between 1966 and 1976 – during the Cultural Revolution – Mao's essay on Bethune was one of most read pieces in Mao's Red Book. Every Chinese school-child had to learn it by heart. All of this obviously contributed to making Doctor Norman Bethune a legend, a great hero.

In the Chinese context, the process by which Bethune became a hero follows a sequence that is typical in the stories of many heroes. He fulfills a need in a time of uncertainty and

danger. He receives social recognition during his life from the people and from important leaders. His death transforms him into a martyr. It pushes his legend to another level. Then he is used by the government to fulfill a political aim. In the end, he receives commemoration at specific dates, such as the anniversary of his death.

On the losing side of history

What happened to Bethune's reputation in Canada? It was almost the mirror opposite to what happened to Bethune's legacy in China, at least from the mid-1930s to the 1960s. During this period, Bethune's life, his values and behavior were not well regarded by his fellow Canadians. He was too atypical, too unconventional, for English Canadians. He wasn't modest; he was a hot-tempered person who criticized colleagues who, he felt, were not putting the patients first. He didn't seem to fit in with the Anglo-Saxon community. As for his personality, he seemed more appreciated by the French Canadians when he worked for the *Soeurs de la Charité*, a Catholic religious order which had the responsibility of managing the *Sacré Coeur* hospital in Montreal. Even if Bethune was erratic and had surprising demonstrations of anger by, for example, throwing inefficient surgical instruments on the floor during a surgery, it didn't affect their general opinion of Bethune. They apparently found his character charming.¹ More important than his character, they appreciated his zeal, skill and compassion in his work. However, he later became despised by French Canadians, too, because of his political views. It was only after he returned from Spain that his communism or near-communism became widely known. During his time in Spain, he received attention from the media for his work on a mobile transfusion

¹ Adrienne Clarkson, *Norman Bethune* (Montréal: Boréal, 2009), 74. In a conference given at the Université Laval in 2009, Adrienne Clarkson had the opportunity to go a little bit deeper in her analysis of Bethune's appreciation among Québécois compared with English-Canadians. The title of the conference was: *Norman Bethune: le plus extraordinaire*, and it was presented in a video conference on November 6 and 13, 2009.

unit, the *Instituto Canadiense de Transfusion de Sangre*. But on his return to Canada, he was no longer welcome at the French-Canadian hospital. The reason was because he chose to support – from the Catholic Church’s point of view – the wrong side in the Spanish conflict. The Republican government he supported was socialist, near communist. The Catholic Church then viewed communists as enemies; they believed that God was on the side of those led by Francisco Franco.²

In Canada, the communist cause was not winning. Maurice Duplessis’s Quebec government voted in the Padlock Law in March 1937, which further reduced freedom of speech for Communists. English Canada didn’t have much more sympathy for the cause of the extreme left. The Mackenzie King government forbade Canadians to volunteer with left-wing Spanish rebels in the Civil War by passing the Foreign Enlistment Act in April 1937.³ Outside of North American medical circles, Norman Bethune was not a well-known person during his life in Canada, with perhaps one exception. When he came back from Spain, thousands of people throughout Canada gathered to hear his public talks. His speeches were popular and helped to raise a lot of money for the war in Spain. But, again, we must note that this attention mainly came from the left side of the political spectrum. He didn’t receive much press coverage, especially in Quebec where a vicar-general of the Catholic Church of Montreal approached radio stations and newspapers asking them not to give publicity to his talks.⁴

The news of Bethune’s death arrived in Canada on November 27, 1939. The press talked about him, sometimes with praise. Then, for about twenty years, he was completely ignored by the Canadian media. His name fell into the shadows. To understand this, we must look at the Canadian historical context. Canada was never sympathetic to communists. After

² Roderick and Sharon Stewart, *Phoenix. The Life of Norman Bethune* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), p. 216.

³ As we know, that didn’t stop hundreds of Canadians from participating in the Spanish Civil War. Norman Bethune departed before the Foreign Enlistment Act became law. He left for Spain on October 24, 1936.

⁴ Larry Hannant, *The Politics of Passion. Norman Bethune’s Writing and Art* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 169.

the Second World War, the Cold War brought even more tensions. This was a time when irrational fears of communism were very strong. They led, for example, to the imprisonment of the first deputy of the Communist Party of Canada, Fred Rose, in 1946.

The lack of an official relationship with the People's Republic of China didn't help. Official Canada-China relations broke in 1949. However, by the end of the 1950s attitudes were evolving. The anti-communist feelings started to get milder, and the Canadian government signed a trade agreement with China in 1958, mainly concerning wheat exports to China. In the face of massive starvation during the Great Leap Forward, this trade opening was certainly appreciated by the Chinese. It also enabled Canadian farmers and businessmen to make money and allowed more Canadians to go to China. When they got there, they learned about Norman Bethune's existence and how famous he was among 800 million Chinese people. It must have been special to hear the Chinese talk about Dr. Norman Bethune as a valiant hero. They must have wondered why they had never heard about him in Canada. A familiar Western expression says that no one is a prophet in his own country. But when we learn that someone from our land is beloved elsewhere, we often desire to learn more about him. When Canadians came back from China, some began to write about Bethune. Articles began to appear in the early 1960s. There were articles about Bethune on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death in 1964. In the same year, there was a radio program on his life. In 1965, a documentary named *Bethune* appeared on television. It presented the life of Bethune, including testimony from people who knew him.⁵ In Quebec, this was the time of the Quiet Revolution which brought new values to Quebec society. The Catholic Church saw its power declining, and the values of the political left emerged more widely in the society. The new context favoured more public appreciation of Bethune in Quebec. Programs concerning Bethune begin to appear in the media.

⁵ This famous documentary is available for free on the internet site of the National Film Board of Canada. <https://www.onf.ca/film/bethune/?next=/film/bethune/>

But this attention to Bethune was very limited. His reputation didn't begin to change significantly until in the 1960s when his ostracism in Canadian society ceased.

This shows how decisive political views were in relation to Bethune's Canadian reputation. Within the small circle of Canadian communists, Bethune was highly regarded. While he was ignored for twenty years by the mainstream media, he quickly became an unavoidable figure in Canadian communist mythology. The first book written about Bethune by a Canadian was published in 1952, entitled *The Scalpel, the Sword*. It was written by two communist authors, Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon. Until the 1970s, this biography was the only book for Canadians about Doctor Bethune's life. He is presented as a valiant communist, a hero, and, we could add, a saint. The official paper of the Communist Party of Canada, *The Canadian Tribune*, was quick in recognizing the importance of Bethune. In its first edition, in 1940, Bethune is praised.⁶ From 1940 to 1969, the *Tribune* had numerous articles on Bethune. In the 1940s and 1950s, there are more articles on Bethune in this journal than in almost all of the main Canadian newspapers. As in the book, Bethune appears in a very positive light. Both this journal and the book, *The Scalpel, the Sword*, were written under the authority of the Communist Party of Canada. All this makes anti-communism even more obvious as the main reason why appreciation for Bethune from Canadians was low from the mid-1930s to the 1960s.

A sudden change of perception

In the 1970s, things changed quickly. Trudeau's government established an official relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Canadian government soon realized how convenient it was that Canada had a great hero in China. Ever since the first meeting between Canadian and Chinese diplomats in Sweden, a neutral land, Bethune has played a role. In

⁶ "Norman Bethune... A Challenge to Mankind," in *The Canadian Tribune*, 20 January 1940.

1969, Canadian delegates presented the documentary *Bethune* (1965) to the Chinese.⁷

The Chinese also had other reasons to start a friendship with Canada. They wanted to break their international isolation since their relationship with USSR drastically deteriorated in the 1960s. The seat of China at the United Nations, with a veto right, was still occupied by the Chinese Democratic Republic (Taiwan). This was irritating for Mao Zedong's government. The country of Bethune's birth seemed to the Chinese government like the perfect place to begin a new initiative. Perhaps it would lead to a diplomatic breakthrough with the West. Canada mainly wanted to open a market with a huge economic potential.⁸ The new relationship became official in October 1970 with a joint declaration from Canada and the PRC. After that, the public representations of Bethune start to appear more and more.

These diplomatic developments led the Trudeau government to push for Bethune's recognition in Canada. The reason was simple: they wanted to consolidate their new relationship with China. The name "Bethune" was often lauded by the Chinese in their relations with Canada. To the surprise of the Chinese, Bethune was not very important in the country from which he came. Chinese visitors to Canada often wanted to make a pilgrimage to Bethune's birthplace in Gravenhurst, north of Toronto. They didn't find much of Bethune in this house – his room was now another boy's bedroom with a poster of Fred Flintstone on the wall. The Chinese didn't speak loudly about their discontent, but they were strongly disappointed. In diplomacy, it is important to agree on some symbolic representations. The poor value Canadians placed on Bethune was a bad sign for the relationship with China. This caused the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada to evaluate the historic

⁷ Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon in China: the week that changed the world*, Toronto, Penguin Canada, 2006, p. 166.

⁸ A goal was also to be a little less dependent on the United States. In Trudeau's view, the United States threatened Canada's independence from an economic and cultural point of view. The very act of recognizing communist China when U.S. president Richard Nixon didn't agree with it was an act of detachment in a relationship that previously saw Canada as pretty much a satellite of the United States.

value of Bethune. In 1967 and 1971, they decided not to give Bethune national historic significance. But in 1972, Jean Chrétien, Minister of Parks Canada, guided by Mitchell Sharp, Minister of External Affairs, decided to apply pressure to change the Board's decision. Bethune officially became "a Canadian of historic significance" on August 17, 1972, less than one week before an important tour of Mitchell Sharp to China. The announcement was made simultaneously in China and Canada.

Shortly after, the question of what Canada should do with Bethune's birthplace came to the Board. It decided that a simple commemorative plaque should be placed in front of his house.⁹ This wasn't the decision the government was hoping for. The prime minister's office was asked to resolve this issue before Trudeau's visit to China in the fall of 1973. A month before the visit, External Affairs purchased the house.¹⁰ This, again, is a sign of the great value Bethune had in the China-Canada relationship. Furthermore, transformation of this house into a museum shows that Bethune is now more widely recognized in Canada. Before him, houses were transformed into museums only to commemorate people with the greatest historic significance, such as Prime Ministers John A. MacDonald and Wilfrid Laurier.¹¹

In this diplomatic and commemorative saga, the press, on the one hand, rejoiced to see this long-awaited recognition of the famous doctor. On the other hand, it criticized the government for trading on the memory of Bethune in its business with China. One caricature in the *Toronto Daily Star* presents Minister Mitchell Sharp coming out of the forbidden city of Beijing with a bag full of money. Two Americans and an Australian

⁹ Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada, Minutes of the meeting, 10 August 1972.

¹⁰ The price asked for the house by its owner was 60,000 dollars. At first, Parks Canada didn't want to provide that money. But before Trudeau's visit in China, it became urgent and they gave the amount asked by the owner. The biggest part of the money to transform the house into a museum came from the External Affairs. Information found in: Programme approval and authority to purchase real property, Gravenhurst, Ontario. External affairs and Indian and northern affairs. 17 September 1973. In LAC. *Dossiers du ministère des Affaires extérieures*, RG 25 Vol. 10915, I 7807, pt 1-2 55-23-1-Bethune pt.1-2.

¹¹ This was why the Historic Sites and Monument Board didn't give its agreement to buy the house.

whisper: "The password sounds like Bethune!"¹² From an economic standpoint, all this diplomacy seems to have borne fruit. The Canadian government came out of the early exchanges with trade deals, especially in the wheat business. The government also promoted more diverse ways of exchange in the fields of culture and medicine. Other than the press, Canadians saw a more diverse picture of Bethune in the 1970s. For example, many biographies were written, a movie with a Canadian celebrity, Donald Sutherland, was filmed, and a statue was brought from China and installed in a public place in Montreal. This time, most of these representations were not coming from communists, but from members of the Canadian establishment. Bethune was being portrayed less as a communist hero and more as a humanist or a humanitarian. The communist side of his story was minimized, if not denied. Sometimes, Bethune's commitment to communism was portrayed by presenting him as a doctor moved more by his emotions than his intellect. Anti-communism was milder in the 1960s, and lighter in the 1970s, but it was still a very unpopular option.

Towards more stable representation

After, the 1970s, the representations of Bethune entered a time of stability through commemoration. He received attention at the anniversaries of his death, mainly every ten years (1979, 1989, 1999, 2009). In 1990, another movie was released with actor Donald Sutherland, the most expensive movie ever made in Canada.¹³ In 1990, stamps were issued in collaboration with China. Joint silver sterling coins were issued in 1998. Bethune remains an important symbol of the Canada-China relationship, as we saw lately when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent portrait medallions of Bethune to the president and the prime minister of China.¹⁴ However, most Canadians have

¹² Graham Pilsworth, "The password sounds like Bethune," *Toronto Star*, 21 August 1972.

¹³ Some parts were filmed in other countries, such as China. The movie was a French, Chinese and Canadian production.

¹⁴ "Justin Trudeau's official gifts to China a nod to his father," *CBC News*, 31 August 2016,

never considered him a great hero because he was never very famous. From personal experience, I have seen that when talking about Bethune, most of the people with whom I was talking didn't know who Bethune was. This of course, is anecdotal and comes from my encounters in Quebec. But it seems that his belated recognition has never reached the core of society. On an individual level, though, he is sometimes viewed as an important hero. Former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, who wrote a biography about him, considers him the greatest in Canadian history.¹⁵ Tony Cowan, curator at the Champlain Trail Museum in Ontario, was asked who he thought were the greatest Canadians in history. He gave two names: Samuel de Champlain and Norman Bethune.¹⁶ In 2004, thousands of Canadians voted on the Greatest Canadians of history. Bethune was ranked twenty-sixth, one place ahead of Céline Dion. Obviously, he is not the hero he is in China, but his legacy in Canada is still growing.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-china-gifts-bethune-medallions-1.3742783>, seen on 5 May 2017.

¹⁵ Daniel Lemay. "Norman Bethune Le plus extraordinaire de tous," *La Presse*, 6 November 2009.

¹⁶ Stephen Uhler, "Museum curator picks two great ones," *The Daily Observer*, Saturday, 15 May 2004.

This Will Be My Name!

David Lethbridge

We need to understand at the outset that Bethune's parents were missionaries of the fundamentalist stripe. Proponents of the evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody, a former shoe salesman; the mother, Elizabeth Goodwin, is hard, implacable, and unempathic; the father, the Reverend Malcolm, intolerant, weak, even self-destructive. Together they would have destroyed Bethune.

He is saved by his grandfather.

The grandfather is Bethune's companion throughout his infancy; the old man's infirmities guarantee that he is constantly in the house. He sits on the sofa, dozing from time to time, napping like his infant grandson. He is always there. The battles and struggles of his life are long past. He exists, for Bethune, as the sole source of succor. He tells his little grandson stories that the child does not understand, but the sound of his voice, his old arm across his small shoulders, soothes him. The grandfather is never in a hurry – where would he go? – never angry, always happy to see his grandson when he wakes in the morning. Sometimes he takes him for walks in the garden, limping heavily, but supporting himself with the wooden cane that always fascinates the little boy. When he has the energy, he plays with him; when he doesn't he is still present and kind. The grandfather is like an old dog; half-asleep, unable any longer to run, he still likes to curl up on the couch sharing, if nothing else, the warmth of his old body with the warmth of the child. Even before Bethune has learned to speak, they share a silence whose unspoken undertone is love.

When the little Bethune, so coldly and poorly loved by his parents, seeks a mirror for his first childish accomplishments, he finds what he needs in this ever-present old man. The smile

on those ancient lips, an approving nod of his gray head, is sufficient to light up Bethune's heart. "Yes, you are brave, you are strong, you are clever;" the grandfather reflects in gestures and words what the small child requires.

Hopelessly vacillating between the coldness of the mother and the weakness of the father, it is in the grandfather that Bethune finds the possibility of hope and pride. All Bethune knows is what he feels: this ancient ally, this old and dying man, functions for Bethune as a strange elderly twin: the old man understands him intimately, he becomes for him a valorizing mirror and an image of strength – even in his infirmity.

And then the catastrophe happens. Bethune is too young, too small, to recognize the increasing decline of the grandfather. But the very young are always alert, always aware of what matters most to them – the shifting tides of family emotion, the explosions of anger, the attempts at reconciliation, that course over their heads like dark clouds on a stormy day. Little Bethune does not entirely understand what is going on, but he knows that when his grandfather falls asleep in the afternoon that his parents' angry words are somehow about this old man whom he loves. The mother is insisting that the grandfather is too much trouble, that he is getting worse, that they can no longer take care of him, that he should be taken away somewhere where other hands can feed and wash him. As the days go by, she becomes increasingly intractable. At first the father resists, but his resistance is weak. He has no counterarguments. And then he rises to his full fury and refuses to discuss the matter. After all, it is *his* father that she wants to dismiss, not hers; and in any event it would be unchristian to send him away. But the mother is not so easily deterred. It would be uncharitable *not* to take him into the care of those who are better equipped to deal with his needs, and the reputation of the nursing home is incontestable. The father rages, but in the end, as always, he capitulates. There is a muted conversation with the grandfather behind closed doors. Little Bethune stands in the hallway trying to listen. He understands nothing, but he is filled with a hollow, empty apprehension.

The terrible day arrives. The grandfather emerges from his room dressed in his best clothes. Bethune's father has a suitcase in his hand. Bethune himself is aware that his mother is somewhere in the kitchen, pretending to be occupied with his infant sister. Events suddenly proceed quickly. Bethune's father tells him to say goodbye to his grandfather. In a tiny voice, Bethune complies. But where is grandpa going? When will he be back? Bethune tries to find the words to ask, but instead his little lips quiver uncontrollably and he breaks into tears. The grandfather leans down toward him, steadying himself with his cane. He wipes the little boy's tears, and speaks to him. The words are comforting, but Bethune cannot hear them: all he hears is goodbye.

Before he knows it, his father is leading his grandfather out the door, and he can see the buggy waiting in the yard, the dark horse nuzzling the grass. The little boy is immobilized, and then he finds his feet and he runs towards them crying, "I want to go with grandpa!" The mother is suddenly there, a dark dragon swooping down upon him, her hard hand on his shoulder, restraining him, holding him back. The voice is cold: "Your father is taking him to the hospital." *Hospital*: the little boy does not know what this word means, but he will remember it. Knowing he is already defeated, Bethune insists that he wants to go with them. Again, the voice from above makes explanations. But the little boy is no longer really listening. All he knows is that it is his mother's will, and that his father is taking his grandfather away. Slowly, still tearful, he makes his way into the living room and watches from the window. He pulls back the curtain and waves, but no one sees him. His father is helping his grandfather into the carriage, and then he tosses the single suitcase into the back. He climbs up and takes hold of the horse's reins. A single flick on the haunches, and the horse is moving. The grandfather glances a last time toward the house, perhaps expecting to see the face of his adored grandson at the window. But it is too late; the mother has already removed him.

Two days later, the father returns. Alone. And then there are only memories.

Bethune's grandfather died shortly thereafter, paralyzed and impoverished in an institution for those who would never recover. No doubt there was a funeral, but we are told nothing about it. Certainly the Reverend Malcolm would have attended, gathered together with the remnants of his family. At the gravesite, the small and hopelessly bereaved grandson, stood alone between the silent darkness of his parents, forsaken of love.¹

Bethune is lost. He knows it. That is to say, there is something lost in Bethune. Something happened to him. Does he know what it is? It is lost in his childhood. Sometimes he is tortured by it; sometimes it tears at him and he responds by tearing back at the world. Sometimes it overcomes him as a deep, and profound sadness. He is lost as a little boy is lost: overwhelmed, inconsolable, threatened on all sides by a darkness that goes on forever. He is lost beyond tears, beyond hope: alone in an endless ocean of wanting to be loved. Something happened, and now he is lost.

There is a lostness generated deep in Bethune's earliest childhood that does not leave him until his final transformation in China. Where does it begin? Most profoundly, in the absence of the valorizing love of the mother. Without knowing what he needs, he reaches out for this love, but he cannot find it. It is lost, and so he is lost. Attentions are paid him, but these attentions are not the love he was looking for; it was something else that wore the mask of love, but hid a dragon's breath.

Bethune loved once, and *perhaps most deeply*, when he loved his grandfather and was loved in return. But that love was torn from him; stripped from him when he needed it the most. Not yet three years old, he finds himself alone. He cannot understand where the grandfather is gone – suddenly the old man is

¹ Hillary Russell, "I Come of a Race of Men..." in David A. E. Shephard and Andr e Levesque, eds., *Norman Bethune: His Times and his Legacy* (Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association, 1982), pp. 13-15. See also, David Lethbridge, *Norman Bethune in Spain* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), pp. 10-11.

simply no longer there, and he is truly lost without him. There is an emptiness in the house that was not there before; it is reflected inside him. There is a hole in the small boy's heart that cannot be filled; a wound that cannot be healed. This loss is his own lostness. He is prey to the unbroken unlove that now falls upon him. But the unremembered memory of his grandfather never entirely leaves him.

At the age of eight, Bethune rejects the name given to him by his father and mother. What a presumption! What an insult! What can he have been thinking? Certainly not of his squalling entry into the world, when names are given. He has no memory of that first scene in the drama of his life. Barely born, wailing and pink in his mother's exhausted arms, the parents gaze upon their first son who will grow up to carry on the name of the Bethunes; whose lineage can be traced backwards for proud generations. Here he is, son of the progenitor, and future father – or so it is quietly and assuredly assumed – of a succession of Bethunes who will go on forever into the future.

"He shall be called 'Henry'," the father says, because it is for the father to say, even if the matter had been decided months earlier, even if the decision of the name had been in fact the mother's demand. It makes no difference; the naming is the father's. This is a boy, a son after all, and he is in this sense the father reborn. It is 1890: the public naming of the child is the necessary task of the father, his responsibility, his acknowledgement of paternity; it is a tradition that approaches a legality. So he shall be Henry; the father has spoken.

But he will not be Henry. Eight years old, subject to the discipline of the father, he will defy the first gift of his parents: his name. He who has had his face pushed into the dirt; who has been put any number of times over the paternal knee – for the Reverend Malcolm was a stern, if strangely ambivalent, disciplinarian – and who will undoubtedly continue to undergo many similar punishments for several years to come. And who should doubt this? Boys of his age and his time are treated with strict discipline. There is nothing remarkable in it at all. What is remarkable is that such a boy would push his own father's face

back into the dirt by saying, "Keep your name. I don't want it. I won't have it. Whatever the consequences, I reject your name." And though he cannot have had words for it, and he certainly could not have spoken them if he did, in this rejection of the name is the rejection of the father himself. And yet, what name does he choose for substitute? By no means an invented name, by no means a freely chosen name – although in his rejection of the name given to him by his father there is the appearance of a free choice, but it is appearance only. No, *he chooses the name of his grandfather*: Norman. And, in accepting the grandfather's name he accepts the *person* of the grandfather into himself. He becomes the father of his father: "I will be my father's father, and not my father's son." The tables are turned.

He is not playing, as perhaps the father first imagines. The act of a little boy, it will be tolerated, and with amusement, for a few days. But after that, what? What happens when the mother – that fanatic missionary, always on the look-out for signs of the devil's work – calls to him as Henry and he quite purposely fails to respond and turns his back? Or rudely storms in saying, "Don't call me 'Henry', I don't want to be 'Henry', my name is 'Norman'"? The amusement quickly vanishes. It is not to be endured. In any event, the father imagines that he is not about to put up with such pig-headedness. But it does no good. He is Norman, and eventually everyone adjusts.²

How are we to understand this change of names? Why does Henry become Norman? What is the meaning of this resurrection of the grandfather in his son's son, and living on inside him?

If the rejection of the name given to him by his father is first of all, and primarily, a rejection of the father, and is intended to effect a reversal in the relations between father and son – albeit an *imaginary* reversal – it is also, and at the same time, a rejection of the mother. 'Henry' is, it must be noted, the name of the mother's father, Henry Goodwin. When Bethune says, "I will

² Library and Archives Canada, MG30 D388, 2/34. Janet Stiles. See also *Norman Bethune in Spain*, pp. 14-15. In writing this essay, I have read closely from a wide variety of existing archives and other important but frequently untapped primary sources, but departed from them in taking a psychological orientation.

not be 'Henry,' he is hurling this name at the feet of the father. But it is, at the same time, a profound insult to the mother: I want nothing to do with you; do not imagine that I will ever be like *your* father, or will carry on any part of him, any part of you in my being. At this level, the change of name is an *ejection*, or at least an attempted ejection, of the internalizations of both his father and his mother. This process of expulsion, of return to sender, is necessarily doomed to failure. Bethune has been constituted by these parents; it is not so easy to exile their internal influence. He will tell us later of the father's fanaticism, the compulsion to action, and of the sense of predestination that lingers on within him; significantly, he will say nothing about his internalized relations with his mother. But Bethune's parents were monsters of ignorance – petty-minded and bound by the zealotry of their form of religion – reactionary, intolerant, and unforgiving. For eight years Bethune has suffered. Now he has made a secret vow: I will never be their son; I will never be who they want me to be. He rejects them and, in rejecting the name they have given him, he tries to vomit up their being inside him. He is lacerated, resentful, hating without wanting to, damaged by their perpetual unlove. In truth, he would do anything to reverse the process of the last eight years. He does not want to feel the rage that lies coiled inside him; like any child, he wants to be loved. In seeking a way forward, he is reaching for some way to break through the wall that separates him from his parents in the hopeless hope that he will discover the tenderness he believes he has lost in a past that never existed.

From this point of view, the secret vow is a fraud; the rejection is a bluff. More than that, it is a *provocation*. Not only does he fling his name in his father's face, he hammers his grandfather's medical plaque to his bedroom door – like Martin Luther hammering his "Ninety-Five Theses" to the Church door in Wittenburg, and like Luther, challenging his forebears and announcing the birth of a new order: I am who I shall be, not what you have made me. The provocation is nailed to the door for all to see, especially the father. It is a sign to the father. For all his bravado, what this provocative child wants is a father

who can be a true father to him, so that he can be his true son. In his heart there is a simple longing: to belong to a father who can love him and be his ally.

But there is much more to Bethune's change of name. In this decision, everything that has happened to him in the past enters in to this totalizing moment, just as everything he will become in the future flows from it. The internalizations of the weak but fanatic Reverend and the unloving mother stand in dialectical opposition to the internalization of the grandfather. The influence of the parents is primary; their presence a daily reality, it is through them that Bethune has discovered the loss and contempt they have bred in him. The grandfather, on the other hand, is a memory. But he is a *living* memory. The infant years he has spent in his company – augmented by the family tales of his unorthodoxy, his strong opinions, and his scientific inclinations – have kept him alive. His grandfather's living memory can be his only ally; his remembered strength can serve Bethune as the strong center of his self-valorization. In his infancy, Bethune had already internalized his beloved grandfather; now, by taking his name and making it his own, the grandfather is impersonated within Bethune through a volitional act, a self-willed determination, a conscious invocation. When Bethune fastens his grandfather's brass nameplate to his door – *Dr. Norman Bethune; this will be my name!* – it is not only a provocation aimed at the father, it is also, and on another interior level, a physical manifestation of his love for his grandfather, a shared merging of affection, a sign of shared identity: to be my father would destroy me; to be my grandfather will save me.

The grandfather was a doctor, a scientist, a professor, a man of books. Bethune's rejection of his parents and his identification with his grandfather is therefore also a rejection of religion in favor of science. Evangelism is his parents' most central project, their chosen reason for being. Bethune's turn towards science is a turn away from their stifling ignorance toward the clean breath of freedom. In attaching his grandfather's name to his door, Bethune has chosen sides – *against* his parents. We

should not imagine that this involves a religious crisis on Bethune's part. Although he has been brought up in the very bosom of the most reactionary and regressive form of religion; indeed, surrounded and stifled by it, there is no indication that he himself was ever deceived by it, nor is there any evidence, now or later, of a "crisis of faith." For Bethune, religion is nothing more than the parents' fanaticism, the external form of their poisonous unlove. It is a fanaticism that he now rejects in favor of the grandfather, and through him, in favor of its antithesis – science and medicine.

If in this radical decision Bethune rejects more than a name, if he rejects his parents' calling and all that goes with it – and attempts, albeit unsuccessfully, to eject the parental internalizations from inside him, then at the same time he will use this decision for medicine against them, and particularly against the mother. He has decided for medicine; this will be an irrevocable decision: *Dr. Norman Bethune; this will be my name; this will be who I will be.*

Bethune's change of name from Henry to Norman, which is in effect the external manifestation of the internalization of his dead grandfather, signals the first major turning point in the upward spiral of his totalization. He can no longer be the child that his parents want him to be; perhaps he can begin to glimpse the self-destruction, the death of self, they have chosen for him and that awaits him in advance. In any event, the pain of their unlove is no longer tolerable. The resurrected memory of his grandfather, emerging from the depths of his past, *detotalizes* the childhood character structure constituted by the parents; he *retotalizes* his being through consciously inviting the grandfather into himself. This turn of the totalizing spiral results in a restructuring of his internality; former attitudes, without in any sense disappearing, are realigned; a retotalized internal unity is effected. His early constitution is transformed by this new totalization: certainly his childhood conditioning is anything but an immutable determination.

In short, Bethune surpasses his constitution through a freely chosen orientation toward the future. He will follow medicine.

He will be a doctor. This is his will. To be the grandfather is to forge a new road forward; a road that began in an infancy and a childhood that tore at him and almost destroyed him, and that will end in a makeshift surgery in revolutionary China.

Bethune is no longer Bethune; the child of religious zealots, predestined to a missionary vocation, has ceased to exist: he has given birth to himself as his grandfather's son. No one understands this yet; least of all Bethune. He comprehends a change in himself; he grasps a corner of its meaning, but the full truth of his intentional decision eludes him. He looks upon his tormentors – the contemptible father, the dragon mother – with different eyes. Insofar as his gaze focuses on the new horizon he has constructed for himself, it escapes him toward an unknown future.

“I will not be Henry; I will be Norman.” In subtle and inefable forms, the family relations are rearranged. The worst of the little boy's insolence is soon enough forgotten; perhaps it is just a game after all. But it is not. The mother understands this more than the others; she has an uneasy feeling that her son has begun to slide away from under her dragon's thumb. Not that this will prevent her from trying to convert him; not now, not ever: but it is too late, he is already gone. It is with the grandfather that he now walks.

Wounded In Love

David Lethbridge

When Bethune was in China he never wrote to his mother. This was no accidental omission. He wrote to many others: friends, colleagues, comrades, but never to his mother. Why not? This simple fact – an absence of letters – provides us with an entry into the nature of Bethune’s personality if we are prepared to follow its implications.

We will see that Bethune’s relationship to his mother provides us with a key to understanding not only *what* Bethune did, in the chronological sense, but also *why* Bethune did what he did. It will reveal something of his underlying psychological structures, of his unconscious conflicts and desires.

This does not mean that we need to turn Bethune into a case history, or to pathologize him, or attempt to provide him with a psychiatric diagnosis. But if we want to get inside the man, we need to unlock the secrets, first of all, of his conflicted childhood, and to trace, at least in outline, how these events affected his later life. We will see if we look closely enough, that until the psychologically transformative period of China, a central theme running through Bethune’s life – perhaps *the* central theme – was that Bethune was wounded in love.

Let us begin with “the Dragon.” This was what Bethune called his mother when he spoke of her in his maturity, at the age of 45 or 46, to his friend Elizabeth Wallace. What can this name mean? What did he intend when he referred to his mother as a dragon? Certainly, it cannot be construed as a designation of fondness. Quite the contrary! A dragon is a terrible beast that breathes fire, a monster of leather-like wings, of claws and fangs that rip and tear. Bethune’s mother was a dragon to him; a denizen of Hell. So he said to Wallace and to others.

A decade earlier, when he was 36, Bethune had contracted

pulmonary tuberculosis and was certain he would die. He was taken to the Trudeau Sanatorium in the mountains of upstate New York where he was prescribed unending and useless bed-rest. Finally, he convinced a staff physician to perform a new, experimental, and potentially fatal procedure to save his life. Live or die, it had come down to a wager: a spin of the roulette wheel and who knew where the ball would drop – blood red or dead black?

The procedure completed, Bethune struggled back to bed. He had a moment of desperate but impelling vision: he saw his entire life unfolding as a disturbing dream. He forced himself to his feet, staggered down to the sanatorium's laundry room half in a daze, and obtained a large roll of wrapping paper. He tacked the paper as a single sheet around each of his room's four walls, cutting out holes for the doors and windows. Using colored chalks, he began to draw a series of murals, an allegory of the cycle of his life from infancy through childhood to his projected and expected death. The title of the work was *The T.B.'s Progress: A drama in one act and nine painful scenes*, and was apparently executed over several despairing days. The mural series – the nine painful scenes – resembles a waking dream, an externalized dream with elements of nightmare, drawn in despair and foreshadowing imminent death. As with any dream, it requires interpretation; its surface phenomena cannot be taken at face value.

Now it is an extraordinary thing that if we turn our attention to these murals, we discover that the pictures of his infancy and childhood are full of *images of dragons*.

The very first panel in the series consists of a drawing of Bethune as an unborn fetus in his mother's uterus. This image is entitled *Womb and Fetus*. The first thing that strikes the observer is that this imagined uterus is utterly dark and inhospitable. The fetal Bethune appears as a fully formed infant, his mouth open in a horrified silent cry and his expression one of agonizing distress. There is no umbilical cord that might represent an attachment to the mother's body, and therefore an attachment to the mother herself. But far more important is the

enormous fact that the fetus is not alone in this dark uterine cave: the fetal Bethune is being savagely attacked by a gigantic red dragon, its long ferocious beak lined with razor-sharp teeth!

The symbolism is clear enough: the dragon is the mother; the mother is the dragon. It is all too obvious that this drawing is a representation of Bethune's feelings about his mother, projected back even beyond infancy.

The second panel was entitled: *Entrance into World, Carried on Arms of Beautiful Angel of Life*. On the left of the image, a tall female winged angel holds a new-born infant. In the center a seated male angel unrolls a scroll on which is inscribed Bethune's future. To the right there are other angels turning away from the central figure. In the far right lower corner, almost invisible, is a very small boy with tiny angel wings, kneeling on the ground, and whose hands cover his weeping eyes. This second panel should be viewed not as a static rendering, but as an image in motion: the angels on the right are depicted in the very process of turning away from the central figure, they are horrified by what they have just read over the angel's shoulder. The turning movement of these angels carries and suggests the motion of the panel as a whole, and from the point of view of this left-to-right movement, the infant on the left of the picture and the child at the lower right are the same boy, rendered two or three years apart: the infant Bethune, and the very small boy Bethune. This tiny, almost invisible, boy is isolated from the rest of the figures: at the age of two or three he is lost and alone.

But it is the third panel that truly captures the attention. *Journey in Thick Wood: Childhood*, reveals not one dragon, but a dozen hellish nightmare beasts. Significantly, each of the major creatures in this panel carries a naked child in its claws: a large blue dragon carries the child upside down and from behind, as does another blue creature swooping down from an enormous dark and threatening tree. A red dragon to the right of the tree, with breasts and a savage beak, holds a small child by the head; the child's arms are crossed in front of him, possibly even bound; a dark pubic patch is visible between the boy's

legs. In the largest image, the child Bethune is bleeding while bat-like creatures tear his neck and he is held in the talons of a huge blue dragon. Since all these creatures hold the various boys with their backs towards them – and this is entirely obvious in the depiction of a boy carried upside down, with his small face toward the ground and his legs bent – there is a suggestion of almost sexual violation.

The picture as a whole seems to indicate a childhood filled with nightmare and horror, cruel beasts and dragons lurking in every corner of the landscape. This, I would suggest, is an accurate rendering.

Now it is true that Bethune has added the words of various diseases such as “measles” or “diphtheria” beside these dragons. But I would argue that these labels have a purely defensive function intended to draw attention away from the fact that Bethune represents his childhood as an unending series of attacks by a dragon. In any event, what Bethune has drawn is a depiction of a terrible, frightening childhood devoid of any indication of happiness, innocence, or joy. He even writes, beneath this panel, and in reference to these violations by the dragon: “The wounds and scars of their attack, he’ll carry to the grave.”

Dragon, hellion: we have seen how these images recur. In the mural he painted at the Trudeau Sanatorium there is not the least indication of maternal love and tenderness. His childhood is infused with horror, not joy. The infantile journey is a torment. A dark womb gives way to a dark wood.¹

¹ The murals remained at Trudeau until the room in which Bethune had stayed was torn down in 1931. Bethune and John Barnwell then brought them to the University of Michigan, where Barnwell had been appointed head of the tuberculosis unit. The murals remained on the unit’s walls until 1960 when renovation work caused them to be removed and the university no longer expressed interest in retaining them. Barnwell then made provisions, in February 1960, for the murals to become the property of the Trudeau Foundation, but to be stored at the nearby Saranac Lake Free Library. The murals were already deteriorating, and Barnwell arranged for color photographs to be taken. Both murals and photographs were stored in the basement of the Library.

In 1963, in preparation for a documentary film on Bethune produced by the National Film Board of Canada, the murals were taken to Syracuse, New York, for photography and restoration, before being returned to the Free Library; the murals were considered to be in very fragile condition.

Once we understand all this, we can begin to construct Bethune's actual infancy and childhood, and we find ourselves justified in refusing to credit the utterly false impression created by so many of Bethune's biographers that his parents were kind and nurturing. The opposite was true.

The mother was a Dragon; and what then of the father, the Reverend Bethune? "His mother made life miserable for his father," so Dr. Georges Deshaies tells us, basing himself on several intimate conversations with Bethune. And the father made this possible, was complicit in this misery, because of his fundamental weakness; a weakness that led to his son's contempt, and then to his hatred.

In 1929, at the age of 39, Bethune wrote: "Father and I had our usual hate together." Such a hatred was not based on any single incident. Like love, hatred takes time to grow and to blossom. It was a hate born of contempt. When Bethune spoke to Dr. Richard Brown, in China, he told him of his "rotten childhood," and of the contempt he had felt for his father.

When Bethune was a boy, his father would spank him for some childish misdemeanor. But then, hours later, after Bethune had been sent up to bed, the father would come groveling to his son, sobbing and begging for forgiveness. Not once, but repeatedly. After the father left, weeping down the hall, Bethune felt sick and disgusted. His father's unmanly and inexplicable weakness was impermissible. Bethune begins to feel,

In 1967, in the middle of the U.S. war against Vietnam, and the Cultural Revolution in China – during which Bethune's reputation had reached new heights, and Mao's eulogy, *In Memory of Norman Bethune*, had become one of the most studied texts throughout the country – Major Edward Wagner, U.S. Army, contacted Dr. William Steenken at the Trudeau Foundation. The Army demanded the murals: there was to be no negotiation, no refusal. A 29 June 1967 letter provided mailing instructions and stated: "This work would be most beneficial to our China area specialists as well as appropriate in our museum." The murals never graced any army museum, nor was there ever any intention that they do so. Bethune's murals were crated and shipped to the Special Warfare division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, an elite military base, and a training center for the covert psychological operations group. Various false rumors arose: it was said that Nixon took them to China as a gift for Mao. Far more likely, it was maintained that the army held on to the murals in order, absurdly, to discover how the mind of a communist worked, probing Bethune's unconscious through an examination of the pictures. When this proved futile, rather than return the murals to their rightful guardians, they were simply tossed into the trash and destroyed.

quite simply: *this father is not worthy of me*. In the end he feels nothing but contempt.

On yet another occasion, in order to teach Bethune humility, his father pushed his son's face into the mud, forcing him to eat dirt. A strange lesson: his father humiliates him to teach him humility.

The next summer, the father took the family on vacation. A cottage had been rented on the shore of Lake Erie. When they arrived, the landlord sized up the Reverend Bethune, and apparently detected the weakness in the man so evident to his son. He claimed that the rental price had applied only to the cottage itself and now demanded an extra fee of five dollars if the children wanted to play on the lawn outside. This was an outrageous demand; a pure case of extortion. Five dollars was no small fee at the time; it would have purchased a week's groceries. But meekly, and without argument, the Reverend gave in. Bethune, helping to unload the luggage, observed it all. He insisted that his father refuse the landlord's demand, and was furious with contempt at his father's weakness.

In the end, what cannot be loved is hated.

It must be remembered that the Dragon and the Reverend Father were devoted followers of the revivalist Dwight Moody. It was a factor in the mother's hard relentless character, and to the father's peculiar combination of fanaticism and contemptible weakness.

We are told that the very day that Bethune was through with high school, he escaped to the forests to work in the lumber camps of Algoma. Why does he not go to the university as so many of his peers had done? He had, after all, graduated with honors, and his chosen career in medicine required a university, not a forest. According to his niece, Janet Cornell, Bethune immediately left home because of his terrible rage. What rage? What has enraged him? Nothing other than his terrible childhood, the "wounds and scars that he would carry to his grave."

Throughout his childhood Bethune has been wounded in love. We should expect to find the results of these wounds in

his relations to women, and to children. And that is precisely where we find them.

Many have referred to Bethune as a “womanizer.” But how true is this?

No one remembers any girlfriends Bethune had as an adolescent. No innocent romances, no stolen kisses behind the barn. Nothing at all. And in his first years at university, while other young men were pursuing young women, Bethune bought dresses and make-up for his sister and took her to parties, and pretended to others that she was his girlfriend.

Many years later, in London, after World War I, he was taken in by a wealthy older woman who financed his medical studies. They lived together, but apparently never slept together. When he met Frances Penney, who later became his wife, he said of his time with this older woman: “Women are very peculiar. They love me because they think I am a boy, and hate me because I’m not a man.” What could this mean, this bizarre and extraordinary remark made by a man of thirty-two to the woman he planned to marry? One can see the very depths of his wounds in these deeply tragic words.

Frances referred to her wedding night with Bethune as “a fizzle.” She did not elaborate, but we know that she and Bethune never had normal sexual relations throughout their two marriages together.

Certainly Bethune had lovers. Eventually, quite a few. Some he never slept with despite intensely passionate feelings towards them: Marion Scott was one; Elizabeth Wallace another. Others he did sleep with, but somehow, it was always the old formula that went back to his relation with his mother: *Whoever I love, will not love me; whoever I love will leave me.*

Perhaps the last of these lovers was Kajsa Rothman in Madrid. He loved her very dearly, but he lost her in the conspiracy of his colleagues to have him removed from Spain.

Wounded in love. Bethune once wrote at the bottom of a Christmas card that he sent to his friends, a line from Walt Whitman: *I do not pity the wounded, I become the wounded.* Perhaps obscurely, Bethune understood that the source of his

wounds went back to his earliest childhood. We know that Bethune always felt a deep love for children, but children, as we shall see, were always denied him.

In Detroit, shortly before he developed tuberculosis, he met and became close friends with Alan Coleman. Over the years, and extending through his first divorce to Frances, and their second marriage, and their second divorce, a strange sort of love triangle developed between Bethune, Frances, and Coleman. The details of this triangle are too complex to be pursued here, but after the second divorce from Bethune, Frances somehow felt herself obliged to marry Coleman. She had hoped that the Church would prevent their marriage, but it did not. She left Coleman many times, just as he left her. And then she became pregnant by Coleman and demanded that Bethune – the man who had always loved her, and wanted a child with her – perform an abortion. Bethune found himself in the position of aborting his best friend's child – Coleman's child – the child he himself had always wanted.

Not so long afterwards, in early 1936, Bethune had a brief and especially bitter affair with Margaret Day. She became pregnant. Bethune was certainly not in love with Day, but as soon as he discovered she was pregnant he offered to marry her. She refused and demanded an abortion, and insisted Bethune would have to do it. All the old wounds opened; the loss of his child, yet again! The child from Frances that should have been his and was Coleman's instead; and now, the same nightmare repeating itself, except this time it truly was his *own* child, wanted so desperately, and deprived of life by his own hands.

Wherever we look, we find evidence of Bethune's feelings for children, especially in Montreal, and the years that followed. The doctors at L'hôpital Sacré Coeur, where Bethune worked with the poor and the indigent, tell us that unlike other doctors: "He was very attached to the children and could often be found on the ward in a rocking chair with a child on his knee." And then there was Yvette Patrice, ten years old, who needed to have an entire lung removed if there was any chance for her to live. It was a delicate and unusual operation. Afterwards, he

would come to her bedside every day and stay for hours. Significantly, Bethune wrote to a friend: "My child is well."

Before he went to Spain, Bethune opened a free art school in his apartment for impoverished children. Bethune knew well how joyless a childhood could be; of how, below the surface of a respectable family, rancor and contempt, hatred and self-hatred, yearning and rage, could fester and grow. In every unhappy child Bethune saw himself; it was his own past, the hidden secret of his own childhood that he sought in these broken children. Their sorrow was his own, and so their healing was a way, unrealized, unacknowledged, of healing himself. Every child's life that he could save, or even brighten no matter how momentarily, was a torch to light the way into his own darkness. Every lost and wounded child was himself.

It is impossible in this context to provide all the necessary details. It is enough to note that the image of the small boy – tragically lost in some way – emerges repeatedly in Bethune's writing and speech. During the defense of Spain from the fascist attack, Bethune's blood transfusion service saved thousands of lives, but not all. One was an eighteen-year-old Norwegian anti-fascist fighting with the International Brigades. The memory of his death tormented Bethune; a year later he told a nurse and colleague during the early months in China, "It was like I killed my own son. That boy was a mother's dream of a son."

The same imagery is evident in the later letters from China. *15 August 1938*: "Some are mere children – 16, 17, and 18 years of age – their grave, smooth faces showing no indication that they have seen violence and death. And when I hurt them, as sometimes I must, they weep the hopeless, overwhelming tears of little children. I was trying to persuade a little boy of 18 to let me amputate his leg. *23 August 1938*: "The little boy with his leg off and the colonel are both doing well, so I am happy. ... The father of the little boy knelt on the ground with his head at my feet to thank me."

It is hardly necessary to point out what is obvious: the consistent use of the words "little boy," and "little children," and the striking poignancy of the phrase "they weep the hopeless,

overwhelming tears of little children.”

And finally, in *Wounds*, Bethune’s finest and most important piece of writing, the young soldiers appear, in metaphor, as boys utterly small, and vulnerable, and broken. He writes: “Next. What an infant! Seventeen. Shot through the belly. ... And this one: Will he run along the road beside his mule at another harvest, with cries of pleasure and happiness? No, that one will never run again. How can you run with one leg? What will he do? Why, he’ll sit and watch other boys run. ... Help him. Lift him off the table. Carry him in your arms. Why, he’s as light as a child! Yes, your child, my child.”

The boy that Bethune addresses in *Wounds*, the boy he accidentally killed in Spain, the *lost* boy – inconsolable, weeping the hopeless tears of childhood, the little boy he seeks always and grieves – this lost boy is himself.

Paraskeva Clark – an artist friend – said of Bethune with an air of strange profundity: “I don’t know if he knew himself, anything about himself ... he was a dream of himself.”

But that was before he went to China, and came in the end, somehow, to know himself.

I do not think that revealing Bethune’s emotional scars, his deep and tormenting psychological wounds, in any way diminishes him. Quite the contrary! Because part of the greatness of his life was that in healing others, he healed himself. Becoming finally, in China, *selfless*.

I'm Not Your Man: Norman Bethune and Women

Larry Hannant

Doctor, medical innovator, propagandist, artist, political activist – Norman Bethune is nothing if not multitalented. The same complexity marks his character. The accounts of friends and acquaintances portray a man whose personality was multifaceted and contradictory – at once brash, reckless and rude, but also tender, compassionate and humane.

No less clouded by contradiction are his relationships with and attitudes towards women. Predatory, patronizing, unfaithful; compassionate, devoted, respectful – all apparently apply to the same man, husband and lover. To tease apart this Gordian knot would require a new biography weaving together his life and those of at least a dozen women. This essay is but preface to that necessary work.

Regrettably, one of the most influential commentators on the ways Bethune interacted with women is also one of the least reliable – Ted Allan. After his first foray into biography in 1952 with *The Scalpel, The Sword: The Story of Dr. Norman Bethune* (co-written by Sydney Gordon), Allan's tales about Bethune became less and less reliable, until with the posthumous online publication of his supposed diaries, the stories have become utterly misleading.¹

The account invented by Allan that has perhaps been most widely disseminated came in the feature film *Bethune: The Making of a Hero* (1990), which followed a script written by Allan.² In

¹ See, for instance, the direct quotes from what are purported to be "Ted's notes dated February 10, 1937" in which Allan claims that he was greeted warmly on arrival in Madrid by Bethune. In fact, on that day Bethune was 500 kilometres away, tending to the tens of thousands of refugees who had fled the fascist assault on Malaga. <http://www.normanallan.com/Misc/Ted/nT%20ch%201.htm>

²The film was dogged by conflict during and after its production, and it is not today found

the film, three key scenes label Bethune as a womanizer who cheats on his wife, Frances, and zealously pursues women without regard to circumstances or their wishes.

Ten minutes into the film, we see Bethune in 1925, married to Frances. (At the time, they were in Detroit, not Montreal, as the film attests, but that is one of the film's less significant inaccuracies.) Clad in his white medical coat, the doctor emerges from an inner room in his hospital office. He emphatically zips up his fly. A comely nurse follows him, adjusting her cap, and seeking to elicit some sign of affection from him. Bethune's reply is brusque, dismissive. The suggestion is that the bon vivant doctor is also a hardened sexual predator.

Bethune's years in Montreal from 1928 to 1936 saw him interacting on many levels with other medical professionals, as well as health and political activists, male and female. After 1930, in the midst of the most profound world economic crisis in history, he was one of many who freed themselves of illusions that capitalism could provide perpetual crisis; they turned instead to socialism or communism. In the Montreal Group for the Security of the People's Health, Bethune and others collaborated to try to change a medical system that put profit above human needs.

One of the first and most active members of the group was Libbie Park, a nurse, writer and political activist who worked with Bethune for about a year, before he left for Spain in October 1936. Park knew Bethune well, as outside of their activism they saw one another socially (although never in an intimate relationship). In a later reminiscence about her friend, Park said simply "I liked his attitude towards women."³ She describes a man who was remarkably like the most liberated of men today. "A woman was a person" to Bethune, and he acted towards them as he did anyone. He was notoriously dismissive of hypocrisy and "enjoyed exposing smugness of any kind" –

on DVD or popular movie sites. However, a Spanish-language-subtitled version can be found online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkshget9ZVc>

³ Libbie Park, "Norman Bethune as I Knew Him," in Wendell Macleod, Libbie Park and Stanley Ryerson, eds., *Bethune, The Montreal Years: An Informal Portrait* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1978), 98-9.

whether male or female.⁴ Another acquaintance, for instance, pointed out how shocked he was when, after asking the wife of a prominent doctor if she was happy with her life, she replied, "Well, yes. But I wish George could make a little more money."⁵

Park acknowledged that women with whom Bethune had intimate relationships (and he had several in the mid-1930s, after his second divorce from Frances) held quite varied memories of their affairs:

To one, it was an experience she wanted, one for which she shared the responsibility, without regrets. To another the experience simply demonstrated what she thinks of now as Norman's mindless pursuit of all women.⁶

That said, Park insisted that the label womanizer, which is so often attached to him "vulgarizes Norman Bethune's attitude towards women and in no way captures the kinds of relationships that existed between him and women who were often friends, and sometimes lovers." That women were "often friends, and sometimes lovers" speaks profoundly to the nature of Bethune's interactions in what were his most sexually and socially active years. It should be added that there is no suggestion – neither in any reminiscence of anyone who knew Bethune or by biographers who are bound by facts – that he had sexual relations with any nurse.

If we're to believe both *Bethune: The Making of a Hero* and official accounts from the Spanish government, Bethune's womanizing persisted in Spain and led to trouble. In the film, Ted Allan seized the opportunity to paint himself into the picture as Chester Rice; a journalist who joins the innovative blood transfusion institute that Bethune conceived of and did so much to create. "He had been a hero to me," intones Rice, "but I became disillusioned with his womanizing and his heavy drinking."

⁴ Ibid., 93.

⁵ Mrs. W. Pitfield to Roderick Stewart, May 17, 1971, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives, Roderick Stewart Fonds P.89 Acc 637/1/57.

⁶ Park, "Norman Bethune," 99

Later in the film, the Spanish doctor in charge of the blood transfusion institute, who accuses Bethune of creating dissension within the united front, promiscuous behaviour, exposing his unit to unnecessary danger and disrespect for Spanish traditions and customs, reiterates Rice's allegation. The only evidence in the film for any of these complaints, aside from his drinking, is a quick earlier glimpse of Bethune sizing up a blonde Swedish journalist. The two are then seen locked in a passionate embrace.

Curiously, this conspiratorial gibberish is also the heart of Spanish authorities' case against Bethune, which resulted in him being run out of Spain in May 1937. One of the fortunate by-products of the dismantling of the Soviet Union was the release of documents from the Spanish Civil War held by the Communist International. Among them are two that lay out the case against Bethune. These are reports of April 3, 1937 and August 17, 1937, both likely originating from the Spanish Communist Party, which had a key role in the policing apparatus of the government. Most of the claims they make against Bethune are so specious that they do not bear repeating. As Michael Petrou, author of *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War*, points out, the "most damning accusation" really springs from Bethune's two-month relationship with Kajsa von Rothman.⁷

Von Rothman was almost legendary in Spain. Descriptions and surviving photos of the Swede depict a dazzling woman. Kate Mangan, a Briton who worked with her in the Republican Press and Censorship Bureau in Valencia, pictured her as "a handsome giantess with red-gold flowing hair" whose confidence, affability and fluency in seven languages made her popular among the host of foreigners in Madrid and Valencia.⁸

The official Spanish government reports make several allegations about von Rothman, most of them as dubious as those

⁷ Michael Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 163-6; Michael Petrou, "Sex, Spies and Bethune's Secret," *Maclean's*, October 24, 2005, 51.

⁸ Jan Kurzke and Kate Mangan, "The Good Comrade," Jan Kurzke Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, 240, and excerpts from the manuscript provided to the author by Charlotte Kurzke; Virginia Cowles, *Looking for Trouble* (New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1941), 32.

against Bethune. Particularly revealing are the persistent insinuations that she was immoral. She is said to have “lived comfortably” in Barcelona before the war – suggesting that she was a prostitute. The Scottish Field Hospital for “immoralities” had dismissed her before she had come to the blood transfusion unit, about December 1936, a canard that historians have dismantled.⁹ Contrary to the reports, von Rothman’s dedication to the Republican cause for the duration of the war and after was praised at the time and subsequently.¹⁰

Republican authorities’ prurient conjecture about von Rothman’s supposed sexual history, and, by extension, Bethune’s morality, speaks to an intriguing but neglected issue in the Spanish Civil War and the writing about it. In that brief moment, Spain was a sexual playground for foreigners, one of the premier opportunities for international lovemaking in the 20th century. When it became clear that the Spanish people’s heroic resistance would deny General Francisco Franco and fascism an easy victory, people worldwide took heart and threw their hopes, their energies and, for many, their bodies into the struggle. Much has been written about the 40,000 men and women who made their way to Spain and became part of the International Brigades and its associated medical and other auxiliary services. Much less has been written about the more than 1000 journalists and the countless other witnesses, apostles, spies and adventurers who descended on Spain during the war years.

The motives of those pilgrims ranged from the highest principles to rank opportunism. Indeed, Mangan, who met many of them at the Republican Press and Censorship Bureau, recalled that through the summer of 1937 “we were so inundated with visitors that Valencia might have been a tourist resort. A lot of them were important people but some came for frivolous

⁹ Norman Bethune’s personnel file, “Report on the Performance of the Canadian Delegation in Spain,” April 3, 1937, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG10-K 2, 545/6/542, reproduced in Larry Hannant, ed. *The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune’s Writing and Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 361-4.

¹⁰ For a succinct summary of von Rothman’s contributions, see Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Constable and Robinson, 2008), 115-8.

reasons because it was the fashion."¹¹ Whatever their reason for being in Spain – the combination of their youth, their independence of any supervisory power or organization, or the danger they faced – created conditions where coupling was easy, desirable, inevitable and often a balm for the carnage they knew.

Some liaisons became famous, among them the photojournalists Gerda Taro and Robert Capa, whose intense professional and personal bond, ended with her tragic death at the front. Others were notorious – the married Ernest Hemingway used the opportunity of reporting on the war to win a new spouse in Martha Gellhorn. Women like Kate Mangan who made their way to Spain to locate men they loved – in her case Jan Kurzke who had volunteered for military service, then, wounded, had disappeared.¹² There were also men who embarked on the trek to find male lovers. In one case, two men – Tom Worsley and Stephen Spender – trying to track down their common lover, the former Coldstream Guard and male prostitute Tony Hyn-dman.¹³ Women and men like Jean Watts and David Crook who “succumbed to the fatalistic romanticism of wartime” and lived for two weeks almost exclusively in one another’s arms before duty pried them apart.¹⁴

The fact that these free lovers were foreigners was not lost on some of the zealots in the Republican government. Indeed, it helped to create an undercurrent of moral panic in the country, already troubled by contentious issues such as the extent to which Spanish women were throwing off the traditional burdens of their semi-feudal society and taking up hitherto-un-imagined tasks, including, for a time, as front-line *milicianas*.¹⁵ That moral panic was an unacknowledged factor in the campaign to oust Bethune. He had made an international name for

¹¹ Kurzke and Mangan, “The Good Comrade,” 240.

¹² Preston, *We Saw Spain Die*, 104.

¹³ David Lethbridge, *Norman Bethune in Spain: Commitment, Crisis, and Conspiracy* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), 125-6.

¹⁴ David Crook, “Hampstead Heath to Tianan Men,” http://www.davidcrook.net/pdf/DC06_Chapter3.pdf, 17.

¹⁵ Larry Hannant, “My God, are they sending women?: Three Canadian Women in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 15, n° 1, 2004, 164-5.

himself through the groundbreaking, blood transfusion project. To assert Spanish control of it without causing a rift with the Canadian Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy required not just a compelling but also an emotionally unchallengeable case. The canards about his disappearing with jewelry or visiting the front without justification can be definitively refuted. However, "immorality" carried a righteous weight that was harder to dismiss. What Spanish authorities condemned in Bethune's brief affair with von Rothman was commonplace among the internationals. Yet it became a stout club used to drive him from Spain, conceding, as he did, "I have blotted my copy book." A scarlet blot it was.

When it turns to China, *Bethune: The Making of a Hero's* construction of Bethune as a sexual transgressor continues. There his alleged prey is the fictional Mrs. Janet Dowd, an Anglican missionary. On their second encounter, after he had earlier cursed her for refusing to dispense with neutrality and provide desperately needed medical supplies to the Eighth Route Army, they find themselves in a hotel in rural China. He offers her a glass of wine at dinner, and as they proceed to their rooms later, he unexpectedly imposes a passionate kiss on her. Her response – a firm no – sends him to his room to contemplate her wistfully from his window.

Mrs. Dowd is modelled on Kathleen Hall, a medical missionary from New Zealand who had begun her work in China in 1923 and who in 1938 operated a cottage hospital in Songji-zhuang, a small village in the no-man's land between the Japanese-occupied Chinese coastal plain and the mountain districts controlled by the Eighth Route Army. Surviving in this delicate environment at a time when Japan was not yet at war with Western countries and still tolerated Christian mission work, she met Bethune. From *Bethune: The Making of a Hero*, we are told that he pressured her to use her special status to help him obtain supplies, and then condemned her as a hypocrite for refusing.

What factual evidence we have challenges this story. The one biography of Hall we have, Tom Newnham's *Dr. Bethune's*

Angel: The Life of Kathleen Hall, unfortunately takes a long passage from a dubious source and, by enclosing it in quotation marks, suggests that it is a faithful reproduction of their conversation. Newnham's source is Allan and Gordon's *The Scalpel, the Sword*, based on a 1948 Chinese novel by Zhou Erfu (*The Story of Doctor Norman Bethune*). The novel itself, Zhou told Kathleen Hall's biographer in 1989, took all its detailed day-to-day information from Bethune's interpreter, Dong Yueqian.¹⁶

Whatever actual words passed between Bethune and Hall, the missionary nurse did not need a dose of invective to understand the dire circumstances and act accordingly. She not only organised mule trains of medical supplies and saw them through Japanese check points, but also attended to wounded soldiers and partisans and recruited nurses for the partisan army, bringing them through rough terrain to the mountains.¹⁷ For all of this, Hall paid dearly. We have direct words from Bethune to confirm his reaction. In his August 1, 1939, monthly report on the operation of his mobile surgical team, Bethune wrote:

The medical supplies obtained in the past three months have chiefly been the result of the energy of Miss K. Hall of the Anglican Church Mission at Sung Chia Chuang [Songjiazhuang]. ... As a result of her activities, the Japanese have burnt her Mission. *I have always felt and expressed some months ago* that too much should not have been asked of these sympathetic missionaries... Miss Hall cannot be used again. Her life is already in danger owing to her help to the Region.¹⁸

Bethune and Hall never met again, as the Japanese expelled her from the region of China they controlled. Hall's impression of Bethune remained high. The Canadian missionary Dr. Robert McClure, who disliked Bethune based on a single encoun-

¹⁶ Tom Newnham, *Dr. Bethune's Angel: The Life of Kathleen Hall* (Auckland, NZ: Graphic Productions, 2002), 104.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 111-2.

¹⁸ Cited in Larry Hannant, ed. *The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune's Writing and Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 351. Emphasis added.

ter of about one hour during Bethune's harried month-long passage across central China, wrote in 1939 that

Contrary to what I have heard from a lot of other people, Miss Hall thinks rather well of Dr. Bethune and evidently once he gets away from his alcoholic beverages he does a good job of work and is not a bit afraid of hardship.¹⁹

Hall's recollections of Bethune, written years later, hinged on her concern that "he might have thought I had let him down when I did not return" to the front-line region she was expelled from.²⁰

Among Westerners in China, Jean Ewen knew Bethune better than anyone else. She travelled with him for five months, across the Pacific beginning in January 1938, then on a marathon exodus from south to north China, pursued by the Japanese air force and army for much of it. The two-shared grueling hardships like trekking on a mule caravan carrying medical supplies to the Eighth Route Army in Yan'an. They also shared exhilarating highs, notably conversing with Mao Zedong through a long night immediately after their arrival at the remote headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party. Unlike Bethune, Ewen had an excellent command of Chinese. Her manuscript recollection about that time is a fascinating portrayal of the terrible privations imposed on China by centuries of feudal backwardness and by the assault of one of the world's foremost military powers of the day on a poor and poorly armed country.

After more than a month of frustrating and exhausting travel, during which they were reported dead, they reached

¹⁹ Newnham, *Dr. Bethune's Angel*, 139. Munroe Scott's *McClure: The China Years of Dr. Bob McClure* (Toronto: Canec, 1977), 230, lays out the Christian contempt for Bethune and his unapologetic communism. In the course of a 500-kilometre rail trip, McClure halted briefly at Tongguan Station, where he was summoned to help find an apparently lost Bethune. Jean Ewen, who spoke Chinese fluently and was on the journey with Bethune, is not mentioned. Bethune was located in the town, rather the worse for alcohol but "still functioning," and he and McClure have a difference of opinion over Canada's self-righteousness, the medical system in Canada and communism.

²⁰ Cited in Newnham, *Dr. Bethune's Angel*, 147.

Xian. Bethune, who had been morose through times of enforced delay as they waited for a lull in the Japanese attack to cross the Yellow River, was revived when he found kindred spirits in one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, Lin Bei-qu, and the redoubtable General Zhu De. They were soon immersed in animated plans for hospitals in the front-line region of Wutaishan. For her part, Ewen found a different release. She went shopping. Sick of her filthy uniform, she roamed the town, found a hairdresser and some cosmetic shops, then set out to buy a dress. She returned to their barracks wearing her prize, which she described in detail in her handwritten memoir and the published version, *China Nurse*: “a long blue sheath – Chinese style with a lace petticoat whose gossamer [sic] scallops peaked out of the slit on each side of the long skirt...” Under the circumstances, Bethune’s reaction was perfectly understandable, but it cut her deeply and confirmed for her his insensitivity: “Where the hell did you get that rig – it’s rather out of place.”²¹ Bethune was baffled that the daughter of a prominent communist was being, as she herself proclaimed, so bourgeois.²²

The frequent quarrels between Ewen and the man she later disparaged as “Big Norman” revealed much about their different orientations. She was resentful of his single-minded dedication to the wounded – during the trek from Hankou to Yan’an he used up their entire store of supplies, mostly treating hordes of ill and wounded civilians. Bethune seemed to be unperturbed that the Japanese were often perilously close, and, to the chagrin of Ewen and the caravan master, carried on attending to civilians, saying “never mind, we’ll make it.”²³ She took this at first to be evidence that he was “a doctor first – concerned only with the person who might be sick or wounded. ... I assumed that somewhere under this obsession there was

²¹ Jean Ewen, *China Nurse, 1932-1939* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), 81-2; handwritten manuscript “You Can’t Buy It Back,” 70-71 in the author’s possession, courtesy of Laura Meyer. The page numbers of the manuscript – some pages of which are typed while others are handwritten inserts – are not reliable.

²² Ewen, “You Can’t Buy It Back,” 339.

²³ Ewen, *China Nurse*, 66.

a human being. Later I wondered even about this.”²⁴ Perhaps more galling were his communist convictions – he once gave her “a lengthy discourse on the virtues of [Communist Party of Canada leader] Tim Buck” – and the fact that “he kept hitting me over the head with my father.”²⁵ Tom Ewen’s loyalty to the CPC, which made his family “merely bystanders to the part he was playing in history,” was still a raw scar on his daughter’s heart.²⁶

Ewen could give as good as she got. She confided to Bethune biographer Roderick Stewart that “I learned early to talk back to men – especially self-styled revolutionaries.”²⁷ Just as he sent her into convulsions with mention of her father, she – inadvertently or by astute insight into his life-long torment – bitingly observed that Bethune was “nothing but a bloody missionary.” No words could more stingingly have invoked for him the horrors of his missionary mother – whom he called “the dragon” and “a hellion.”²⁸ Predictably, he poured his scorn onto Ewen for that taunt.

While the two travellers sparred over the others perceived and real weaknesses – like any couple on a road-trip from hell – they ultimately came to admit to a grudging admiration. Bethune, who was imbued with that era’s “doctor knows best” prejudices, paid her the highest compliment that he likely could envision coming from a surgeon. After two days of continuous surgery at Yan’an, Bethune took her aside and said “Nurse, I take back everything nasty I have said to you about your work, you are an excellent scrub nurse.”²⁹ (His lengthy despatches to Canada also consistently praised Ewen.) Curiously, Bethune’s

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁵ Ewen to Roderick Stewart, March 7, 1972, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives, Roderick Stewart Fonds P89 Acc 634/1/108.

²⁶ Ewen, *China Nurse*, 10.

²⁷ Ewen to Stewart, March 7, 1972, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives, Roderick Stewart Fonds P89 Acc 634/1/108.

²⁸ Lethbridge, *Norman Bethune in Spain* (2013), 3-11; “Gordon’s Notes,” 2, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives, Roderick Stewart Fonds, P89 Acc 637/1/57. Alone among Bethune’s biographers, Lethbridge has perceptively turned the focus of Bethune’s psychological makeup from his father to his mother, and in doing so has opened up a hitherto-ignored aspect of Bethune’s character.

²⁹ Ewen, “You Can’t Buy It Back,” 189.

apology is included in her manuscript. However, it did not make it into the published *China Nurse*. What did make it in was his warning to her never to refer to him by his first name and not to offer a diagnosis of any patient's ailment.³⁰

Bethune lived with Ewen longer than he had with any other woman except Frances. Although theirs was never an intimate relationship, hardship and danger welded them closer together than might have been seen even between husband and wife. In her manuscript and her subsequent correspondence with Roderick Stewart, she was utterly candid. Thus, her observations on two significant aspects of his character hold considerable weight. These were his drinking and his reputation as a womanizer. In a letter to Stewart in 1971, Ewen referred specifically to the scandalous stories attached to him. While proclaiming him to be "a lady's man" at whom women threw themselves (where she observed this is not stated), she took pains to add, "He never debauched either with women or alcohol as far as I knew him in and on the way to China."³¹

Conducting research for his first biography of Bethune, Stewart recorded a telling observation that Bethune never tolerated any situation in which he felt there was "a harness on him. Most women made that mistake."³² Like women in Bethune's life, historians have found it difficult to put a harness on him. In no way is Bethune more difficult to rein in than with regard to women. As on so many issues, the enigma of Norman Bethune persists there, too.

³⁰ Ewen, *China Nurse*, 60; "You Can't Buy It Back," 47.

³¹ Ewen to Stewart, attachment to letter of November 11, 1971, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives Roderick Stewart Fonds P89 Acc 634/1/108.

³² "Gordon's Notes," 3, Osler Library of the History of Medicine Archives, Roderick Stewart Fonds P89 Acc 637/1/57.

The Bethune Health Group

Libbie Park

Just why a group of persons in Montreal in late 1935 should have been concerned about problems of public health may be made clear from well-documented accounts of health in Montreal in the 1930s. The group, now often referred to as the Bethune Group, became known at the time as the Montreal Group for the Security of the People's Health. Though clumsy, the title is descriptive and expressed our reaction to the conditions and circumstances of people in Montreal during the Depression years of 1935 and 1936.¹

The group was organized due to the initiative of Norman Bethune in December 1935, shortly after his return from attending the International Physiological Congress in Moscow and Leningrad in the summer of 1935. I was a graduate of the Montreal General Hospital School of Nursing and in 1935 was working part-time in the eye clinics at the Montreal General Hospital and the Montreal Western General Hospital. I met Bethune first at a meeting organized by the Friends of the Soviet Union, at which he spoke, and we kept in touch. At that time, Bethune was developing ideas of a "model city" for tuberculosis patients who would have just spent a period in hospital undergoing treatment. The Model City was to be a complete rehabilitation Centre, fully equipped with clinics, living accommodations, recreation areas, parks, shops and workshops. He gave much thought to the project he was proposing. He and his friend, the artist Fritz Brandtner, sketched a design for the

¹ *The Bethune Health Group* by Libbie Park was originally published in *Norman Bethune: His Times & His Legacy* edited by David A.E. Shephard and Andree Levesque (Ottawa: the Canadian Public Health Association, 1982), pp. 138-144 and is reprinted here by permission of the Canadian Public Health Association. Libbie Park (1900-1986) was a Public Health nurse, knew Bethune in Montreal, and was a charter member of the Bethune Health Group.

Model City in pastel colours, and debate and discussion about it led him to think in terms of an overall health plan that would permit people to escape from what he and the group's members thought was an intolerable situation: for want of funds, people suffered and died from diseases that were curable, that could have been prevented had sufficient money been available.

A wealth of scientific knowledge existed but the lack of money made it impossible to use this knowledge for the benefit of the patient. As one writer put it, "dollarless doctors faced penniless patients." Bethune was determined to do what he could to change the situation, and he invited a few you and interested doctors to become the nucleus of what he saw as an expanding group of doctors, nurses, social workers and dentists that would work out a proposal for medical and health care in Quebec. I was invited and I accepted.

The nucleus met for the first time at Bethune's apartment on Fort Street, at the corner of Tupper Street. Present at the meeting were Dr. Hy Shister, then in cardiology at the Women's General (now Reddy Memorial) Hospital; Dr. Wendell MacLeod, a young doctor in private practice in Montreal; Bethune, then Head of Thoracic surgery at l'Hopital Sacre-Coeur; and myself.

Bethune had been investigating the problems of health care. He had been in touch with Dr. I. S. Falk in the United States, author of a pamphlet *The Present and Future Organization of Medicine* and several books. Bethune had received copies of the programme and principles of the Medical League for Socialized Medicine in New York; and he had started to read material on systems of medical care from Britain and European countries. He understood, too, something that not all doctors at the time would have accepted. The group he was forming was not to be just a medical group, a group of doctors; it was to be a medical and health group, to include members of all the allied health professions, all of whom, if possible, should be included in working out a health plan.

The group would grow; the original members would at-

tract others. Public meetings would be arranged, but the main line of action would be to study and analyze medical and health services in developed countries and the relationship of these services to the state. From this analysis would come the basis for proposals on medical and health services in Quebec, support for these services being rallied by the group. However, study and discussion alone did not interest Bethune; they were to be followed by action and at the first meeting of the group, Bethune outlined his proposals along those lines. We were in general agreement and we considered how to expand the group and to divide the work.

By the second meeting, we had added Kay Dickson, of the Victorian Order of Nurses, Dr. Moe Bronstein and Dr. R. Gottlieb. Dr. Frances McNaughton joined us later, as did Dr. Ruth Dow, an intern at the Montreal General Hospital. An actuary helped us work out cost comparisons for various health programmes.

At later meetings, the number present varied; usually we had not more than 10 or 12, but more often, there were fewer. Among Bethune's papers is a list from a desk pad with 16 names of persons, apparently to be called for meetings. The names include those of Florence Pike, a social worker, and of Dr. H. N. Segall, who has recorded an interview about the group meetings. At least two women were nearly always among the members, sometimes more.

A problem was where to meet. Bethune's Fort Street apartment was too small. For the first few months, members with accessible and roomier homes came to the rescue. In the spring of 1936, however, Bethune moved into a flat on Beaver Hall Square, which was conveniently central and had a large studio, and here we then met regularly.

The group was an unstructured one in which Bethune was very much the leading spirit. Though no minutes seem to have been kept meetings were business-like, starting at about 8:30 p.m. and ending at about 11:00 p.m. They were not social events, but they were not dull – they were lively and exciting. We were all busy people, concerned about doing the job we

had undertaken, and only those who cared about the subject attended. One became a member by invitation or by simply attending and taking part in the discussion. A member would give a paper on the country the member was studying, and discussion followed. Someone else would volunteer for the next meeting. Occasionally a guest would attend, sometime from out of town, and then meeting would be longer. I remember visitors from Detroit and Chicago.

Bethune was a popular public speaker and often accepted speaking engagements. His wide reading, his interest in health care and his personality made him a lively and attractive speaker. On at least two occasions after the group had begun its work, Bethune spoke as an advocate of socialized medicine. One speech was delivered in February 1936 in Memphis, Tennessee, to the Mid-South Medical Assembly, another on April 17, 1936, when he was one of the speakers at a symposium on medical economics organized by the Montreal Medico-Chirurgical Society, of which he had just been elected a Fellow. The Society's minutes show that 128 physicians were present, an unusually large number. At the Montreal meeting, he announced that a group had been studying plans for the security of the people's health already in effect in other countries and he offered to provide further information about it to anyone interested.

Two events gave us a new sense of urgency and direction. The first was the setting up in June 1936 of the Unemployment Medical Relief Commission in Montreal, as a subcommittee of the Montreal Relief Commission. The second was the announcement of a provincial general election to be held on August 17 1936 – the election that brought Duplessis to power for the first time. We wanted to comment on the Unemployment Medical Relief Commission and particularly to put a health plan proposal before the public and the political parties and the candidates in the election. The Depression had hit Montreal hard – in March 1936, 170,000 persons were on relief out of a population of 985,000 – and the city finally proposed to set up a fund of 25 cents per month for each person on relief. This

would amount to \$500,000 a year, from which doctors, dentists and druggists, who provided services or medical supplies to those on relief would be paid. The cities plan was an important step, even if inadequate, but we were concerned that it might not survive the election. We were particularly anxious that any plan be made province-wide, and that the allotment of funds per person be doubled.

We set to work at increased tempo to produce a document setting out our proposals. The first draft of our position went out in mimeographed form to the medical, dental and nursing societies under a covering letter from Bethune dated July 27, 1936. The same material appeared in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* for August, 1936. The first version drew extended coverage in the *Montreal Gazette* – a lengthy news story and editorial comment.

It was when we came to release the material that we had to choose a name for the group. Bethune favored using the words ‘socialized medicine’ in the name, but the group did not agree. It was not that we were disagreeing about the nature of our proposals; the question concerned the name for ourselves as the persons putting forward the proposals. What Bethune was calling socialized medicine was in fact a system of public medicine that could operate under the existing economic system. Moreover, the words ‘socialized medicine’ were ambiguous, for they could refer to a social as distinct from an individual approach to the practice of medicine, or to medicine as organized in a socialist society. Finally, we agreed that the best solution was a more unifying descriptive title, accurate even if cumbersome – the Montreal Group for the Security of the People’s Health. Letters with Bethune’s signature were sent under that title.

Both our documents began with a detailed examination of the Unemployment Medical Relief Commission as proposed by the city. This dealt with a problem that was very much on our minds at the time, and we devoted far more space to it than we did to our own proposals for a health plan for the province. We wanted medical relief expanded to include surgical and

dental treatment and home nursing. We called for a City Medical Planning Board and a City Nursing Planning Board – and, above all, we took the position that the plan should be province-wide and that the amount of money devoted to it should be doubled.

For our proposal, we borrowed an idea from the Ontario Medical Association, which had recently suggested that experimental programmes be set up in that province. We suggested four plans as being typical of what was being discussed and debated, to be tried out in carefully selected areas of Quebec and judged based on results.

1. Plan One we described as *Municipal Medicine*. A dedicated team of doctors, dentists, and nurses, representing all specialities, should be named by a Provincial Medical Planning Board. The team would be provided with a small modern hospital and would be responsible for health protection and for the cure of disease in the entire municipal area chosen. All members of the team would be paid a salary. The total cost would be borne by municipal taxation and a provincial grant. (In his speech to the Montreal Medical-Chirurgical Society, Bethune had stated that, if \$3000.00 a year was taken to be an adequate income, 40% of all physicians in the United States were earning less than that in 1933).
2. Plan Two we termed *Compulsory Health Insurance*. Discussion concerned whether health insurance should be compulsory or voluntary, and whether the premiums should be paid by the individual or the state or shared. We proposed that a municipality with a homogeneous economic pattern be selected, one with a minimum of relief recipients. All wage earners would be included in a plan of health insurance, regardless of their incomes...
3. Plan Three we referred to as *Voluntary Hospitalization and Health Insurance* to be applied in a selected urban municipality of from 5,000 to 10,000 persons.

4. Plan Four was different in character; it was a proposal for a province-wide plan to deal with medical care for the unemployed. This was an urgent matter: Quebec, with 12% of the population of Canada, had 28% of all unemployed and the highest proportion of unemployables – 40% of the total in the country.

As far as Plans One, Two, and Three were concerned, Two and Three each moved further, away from what the group itself thought desirable. Our aim was to get away from a debate over terms by putting the alternative plans into practice in different localities under controlled conditions, to be judged by results and public reaction.

Our first document ended with an appeal for a mass meeting of all the health professions – English and French – plus social workers, and the Trades and Labour Council, to form a united Professional Front and to put forward the demands of the professions. “Action” (surely a Bethune touch) was to be “immediate, united, and decisive.” The second document expanded the argument, improved the presentation, made some corrections, and ended with an appeal for the calling of a Congress of French and English doctors, dentists and nurses to fight racial and professional isolation, and to unite in a common cause – health security for the people, and economic security for the professions. (While our group was at least aware of the importance of unity among the professions, neither of the documents seem to have been issued in French, and neither was noticed in the French-language press.)

What was the importance of the group’s work? Looking back, it is not easy to assess the group’s work. Yet we were pioneers, not in initiating discussions about health insurance – that was well under way – but in involving all the health professions in matters that until then had been the concern mainly of the medical association. In this, the influence of the group extended much beyond its membership. Politics in the narrow sense did not enter into our work, we were all professional people dealing with matters in which we had a common interest and concern, and we did not argue with each other about

our personal political or philosophical beliefs – which certainly would not have been identical.

Bethune's biographers have not done justice to the period Bethune spent in Montreal. Allan and Gordon have captured the feel of the times and the spirit of Norman Bethune as we knew him, but they are weak on details and dates. For example, they referred to "one hundred" doctors, dentists, nurses and social workers who joined the group, though if there were as many as 20 who could be called members I would be surprised. Stewart has broadened our knowledge of the details of Bethune's life, but he stated that the group decided to "lay out a detailed plan for a policy of socialized medicine," but that was never our plan, no matter how one defines socialized medicine.²

In a personal sense, as I have tried to show in *Bethune: The Montreal Years*,³ work in the group was intense and a happy experience in a joint effort, and when Bethune left for Spain in October 1936, and I left for Toronto in the autumn of that year, the group did not dissolve. The work of the group carried on in Montreal by Wendell MacLeod, Kay Dickson, Francis McNaughton and others.

As for Bethune, the group, like everything he took part in was a means to provide a practical answer to a practical problem, an answer that could be acted upon.

Spain became for him a practical problem of direct concern, and he acted accordingly. Likewise, the cause of the Chinese people was to him a call to action, and he responded.

Some have seen Bethune in 1936 as a desperate man, running away from a Montreal that rejected him. We who worked with him in the group would not agree. He did what he felt he had to do; he could not have done otherwise.

² See Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon, *The Scalpel, The Sword: The Story of Norman Bethune* (Boston & Toronto, 1952), 91 and Roderick Stewart, *Bethune* (Toronto, 1973), 74.

³ See Wendell MacLeod, Libbie Park, & Stanley Ryerson, *Bethune: The Montreal Years* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1978).

Searching for Bethune's Beating Heart

Dennis Bock

Sometimes propagandists, historians and novelists rub shoulders while digging in the same grave. But usually they are looking for different things. The historian is interested in discovering the facts surrounding an historical time, event or character. The propagandist is more selective in what he wants to retrieve, and what he needs to leave behind. For the propagandist, there is a lesson to be taught, after all. Symbols are fragile things and need to be carefully managed. American school children, for example, are told about their first president's exemplary moral character in the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. The young president-to-be, guilt-ridden after chopping down his father's tree, confessed to the crime shortly thereafter, so unyielding was his need to tell the truth. These same Americans learn much later, if at all, that this same boy at the age of eleven inherited ten slaves from his father; that by forty-two he had amassed 135 slaves; and never once after becoming president of the United States of America did he speak out against the practice of slavery.

The novelist often finds himself alone in that grave, shovel in hand, long after the historian and the propagandist are done for the day. He digs on into the unknown, hoping to discover something more: innuendo, suggestion, cracks in the official record. He seeks the private moment, the unguarded thought or urge or regret that will open up his character in a way that historians and propagandists do not. What the novelist wants most is a glimpse into the unspoken narrative of the human heart. He looks for the motivation behind the act and event, the driving life force. Not the what or when or how but the why. Why did a certain historical figure do what he did? What drove him? What unspoken, private thought or awareness or

fear propelled him forward? The answer to this question isn't told in the hard facts of dates and locations of the historian, or in those simple-minded, one-dimensional stories of virtue and moral rectitude pedalled by the propagandist. We want the richer portrait, one that sustains contradiction, moral ambiguity, and discrepancy.

George Orwell wrote an essay called "Why I Write" seventy years before I wrote *The Communist's Daughter*. My novel is a fictional Norman Bethune memoir. It is told as a series of chapter-length letters written to the daughter Bethune never had, born out of an intimacy he had in Madrid with the real-life, suspected Nationalist spy, Kajsja von Rothman. When I began writing that novel I knew very little about my protagonist. I knew that Bethune had done some heroic things in his life. I knew that his many accomplishments were beneficial to many people. Essentially I knew enough to want to know more. But certainly my understanding of Bethune's character was incomplete.

It was the George-Washington-cherry-tree version of Bethune I first met as I began my research. All glory and sacrifice. But the more I learned about his heroic contributions to Canadian medicine, the Republican cause in Spain and the fight against fascism in China, the clearer it became that I did not know the first thing about the man himself. I read about his travels, what he did, who he associated with. What I knew was his impressive résumé. But the man behind that résumé was still as elusive as any of Shakespeare's ghosts.

In his essay, Orwell wrote:

What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art. My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing.

My Bethune novel is my attempt to find the true human character in the official record of the Bethune myth, to correct the lie of the one-dimensional portrait that pervades the Bethune story. Since his death in 1939 we have known little more than the official Bethune. Bethune the hero. The icon. The noble soldier. In my mind he was certainly all these things, and warrants every bit of respect that surrounds his name. He changed the world in a way very few of us can claim to do. He was bold, brash, courageous, self-sacrificing, and brilliant. But he was more than this, and this is what bothered me in the Bethune myth that was unfolding before me. Where Orwell wanted to “make political writing into art,” I wanted to find the real man in a story that had been simplified for the sake of political expediency. I needed to find his humanity, to respect him enough to discover the complicated personal darkness that drove him.

Bethune’s life is well documented, thanks in part to the man himself. He kept journals, wrote letters to newspapers, maintained correspondence with friends and family, and even wrote fiction and poetry. It’s remarkable how much he was able to do this with a schedule and life as busy as his was. It is a treasure-trove of material. It helped me know the man better, certainly. But this was not enough, too geared as it was to one specific reader or other, friend, family-member, colleague, lover, with an eye to evasion, empire-building, or agenda.

Where I met the real Norman Bethune, I think, is in the silence that fell over him after he came back from Madrid, and before leaving for China. In the months between June 1937 and January 1938 he fell virtually silent. He stopped writing. The historian and propagandist abhor, or at least lament, such a gap in the historical record. But for the novelist, in context, it’s significant and telling. The silence that descended over Bethune told me more than a hundred pages of letters filled with his high hopes and fond musings. Madrid, he’d said, was the center of the world. It was in this world he’d placed all his optimism. It was there that the most important battle of the twentieth century was unfolding, worthy of all his political idealism

and humanitarian spirit. But he did not find in Madrid what he'd hoped.

His beliefs were challenged. He was let down, resisted and betrayed. Certain Spanish authorities were suspicious of his intimacy with the suspected spy, von Rothman, and wanted to tar him with the same brush. He was appalled by the small-minded and petty bureaucrats who controlled his small corner of the war. He was, as Larry Hannant notes in his book, *The Politics of Passion*, "snubbed by his comrades." He was forced out of Madrid, humiliated, and returned to Canada in June 1937.

He toured North America with the film he'd been involved in making. He raised money to buy ambulances to help the cause back in Madrid. But he was a different man. Silenced, drinking heavily, he entered into a long period of self-doubt. The man who'd written constantly all his adult life fell silent. But why? And here is where I found the answer to that question of what drove Bethune into the fight in China.

The moment I understood the betrayal and self-doubt Bethune must have felt at his ouster—his sense of pain and humiliation—the convenient Bethune myth died and the real man was born. It was in this absence of the historical record where I finally found Bethune's beating heart.

For the novelist, true character is revealed in the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the human spirit. Martin Luther King wrote, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." As novelists we are interested in the tragic flaw, for flaws reveal what makes us who we are. Bethune was a courageous man, yes, but his impulse to save the world did not rise up from a purity of spirit, quite the opposite. It rose up from a conflicted spirit, self-doubt, and the need to heal the wound of his Spanish betrayal, and it was in the tragedy of the war in China that he sought redemption.

The novelist has no interest in making friends with his characters or using these characters to prove a point or deliver a message. He must respect his protagonist enough to permit human failings to shape the story at hand. So long after the pro-

pagandist exits that grave with his selective truths, followed by the historian with her cache of objective truths, the novelist stays down there, digging for more, until he hits pay dirt. For me, that pay dirt was Bethune's Spanish humiliation. I do not believe that this detracts from Bethune's work in China. It is a reminder that a man with very real human emotions—and not an idea or symbol or icon—worked and died serving a cause he believed in absolutely, and in recognizing this we return the humanity to the cause he served.

Things Left to Lilian¹

Yan Li

Prelude

On a wintry day in November 1939, when Dr. Norman Bethune was dying in a mountain village in northern China, he left a will dividing all his belongings among his comrades in China and Canada. In the long list was this simple sentence: "The large Japanese Army flag, to Lilian."

Who was Lilian? It remained a mystery for 75 years and finally came to light in the summer of 2014.

I.

"Of course, my mother was very beautiful. Everyone said so."

"Who was chasing after whom? Do you have any idea?"

"Umm... I think Bethune was the one..."

The late summer sun shed a gentle light on the dark sitting room with century-old furnishings. The wooden shelf by the window, narrow and shaky, held a framed photo, in black and white, of a young woman in a winter coat and a beret, with a charming smile. A real beauty, indeed.

The man in the shadows was trying hard to keep his back straight in the armchair, frowning as he tried to control the pain in his injured leg. His long grey hair sheltered his deeply wrinkled cheeks, but his grey eyes flamed with a mix of wisdom, agony and satire.

"What exactly was the relationship between your mother and Norman Bethune? How much do you know about it?" I asked, hoping he would not mind my frankness.

¹ Based on Yan Li's Chinese story, *The Last Love Letter from Norman Bethune*, winner of the Shanghai Journalism Award in 2016.

Too abrupt, I realized, seeing his twisted brows.

"I never asked her. Such questions would have been very impolite. As English people, we were trained from childhood not to show our emotions."

"Could it be possible that you are the son of Norman Bethune?" I brought up the issue deliberately, hoping to dig out more hidden truths.

He burst out laughing. "That's impossible! The last time they met was in 1938. Bethune never returned to Canada after that, and I was born in 1942!"

II.

I grew up in China reciting the late Chairman Mao Ze-dong's article, "In Memory of Dr. Norman Bethune," which praised him as a perfect role model for all Chinese citizens to follow. In 1987, upon graduating from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences with an MA in Journalism, I saw most of my classmates leave for the US. I was the only one choosing to go to Canada, lured by the secret wish of seeing the homeland that nourished the one I felt was the most perfect man in the world.

Arriving in Canada, however, I was deeply shocked to discover other reactions to my hero, many exhibiting ignorance of his name, a few pointing out his moral flaws, and one even labeling Bethune a "political criminal." Others saw him as a womanizer, a drunkard, a swashbuckler, and a communist.

The controversies in his homeland poured icy water onto my vision of the national hero in China who died there in 1939 during the war with the Japanese.

Stories had it that while he was fundraising across Canada in 1937 to support the Spanish Civil War, he was mocked by audiences who refused to donate money because he was a "communist".

"Yes, I am a Communist," the doctor acknowledged. "That is a matter of my own beliefs, and my own decisions. If I say now that milk is good for children, will anti-Communists there-

fore suggest that it is not good? And if I say that people need bread, does it mean that they don't, simply because the man who says it considers socialism the most equitable, the highest political and moral form of human society?"

Besides stereotypes from the Cold War about communist ideology, there were also sneers arising from his personal life. Common criticisms include his marrying and divorcing the same woman twice and the mysterious love affair with an attractive Swedish woman in the Spanish battle-fields in 1936 that led to his humiliating expulsion.

His colourful life not only left behind touching memoirs written by his comrades, but also inspired writers, born long after his death, to create sensational fictions exploring the complexity of Bethune.

The Communist's Daughter, written by Canadian novelist Dennis Bock, imagines the scene where Bethune is trapped in the mountains of Northern China during the War of Resistance against the Japanese Invasion. Here Bock has Bethune composing a long letter to his never-seen daughter, born to his Swedish lover who was put to death shortly after the birth of her child.²

When I praised the novel and expressed my hope to help get it translated and published in China, Dennis commented, "Yan, I must warn you that readers in China might not like to read about the Bethune portrayed by me in this book."

"You do not understand the Chinese, Dennis," I told him. "Our thoughts are far more sophisticated than you can imagine."

An anecdote told by my colleague, Dr. Judith Miller, also failed to disturb me. Her aunt used to work in a Montreal hospital with Bethune in the 1930s.

"My aunt said that he was energetic and talented, dedicated to his patients, so it was not surprising that many women were attracted to him. Once, a young nurse did not show up at work for days. When people could not find her, they complained to the head nurse about her absence. The head nurse was checking patient files. Not even looking up, she simply responded,

² See Dennis Bock, *The Communist's Daughter*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2006.

‘Go and check where Norman is these days.’”

Whatever flaws Bethune might have had, I saw a real man facing the world with honesty, courage, sympathy, and compassion. Bethune, for me, stood in sharp contrast to the slimy sophistication and canny survival tricks common in the world today.

“Bethune was by no means a perfect man,” said Ms. Xiong Lei, daughter of a late state leader of China. “As a matter of fact, it was the Chinese revolution, the Chinese army led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the common people in China who educated and influenced him and cultivated his image as a hero.”

Was she right? Why didn’t Bethune create any sexual scandals during his two years in China, unlike his life everywhere else? Her interpretation reminded me of the most popular book about this man, *The Scalpel, the Sword: the Story of Doctor Norman Bethune*.

III.

An episode about the ambiguous contacts between Norman Bethune and Kathleen Hall, an Anglican missionary nurse from New Zealand, has lingered in my mind. The brief description in the book about their encounter suggests no obvious romance. Yet the few lines have inspired my imagination, fully aware of the irresistible charisma Norman had for women.

Norman met Kathleen during the fall of 1938 among the cliffs of the Wutai Mountains in northern China. Kathleen and her Chinese villagers were drawn by the sight of “the medical team on mule backs” passing through. The delicate, pale woman caught Norman’s eye.

Working for years among the Chinese peasants and speaking fluently the local dialect, the missionary woman must have felt thrilled to see a white man passing along this secluded corner of the world. How long did they talk by the roadside? Did she feel awkward as she uttered her first English words after so long?

At Kathleen's invitation, Norman frequented her church clinic a few miles from the village; it was where his medical team stayed when in the area. From the very beginning, she made no effort to conceal her enthusiasm. Was it a secret desire for love, or just because she longed for friendship among her own type of people? Whatever expectations she might have cherished would remain a mystery forever.

For Norman, however, this pretty woman moving with dignity and speaking with sincerity simply reminded him of his mother, who had also been a missionary and had worked in Hawaii as a young woman. Bethune, who was 48, probably saw that a woman like Kathleen would not be moved by anything except faith. It might also be true that a woman who could be moved by selfish interests would never attract a man like him at all.

The mission was built like a fort, standing out magnificently on the muddy flats. In the center of the fort stood the brick chapel with a cross rising from the steeple. The bell tolled as Norman crossed the empty yard. Inside, a dozen or so kneeling peasants in black cotton jackets and bulky pants were singing in Chinese, led by their missionary lady. The singing took Bethune back to the Basilica Notre Dame in Montreal, where the music of the choir accompanied by a pipe organ circled around the high ceiling. Familiar, but not the same, as the bumpy soil under his feet reminded him.

"I sometimes dream of coffee, rare roast beef, of apple pie and ice-cream. Mirages of heavenly food! Books ... Are books still being written? Is music still being played? Do you dance, drink beer, look at pictures? What do clean sheets feel like in a soft bed? Do women still love to be loved? How sad that all such things can be easily accepted without wonder and amazement..." he wrote in a letter to a friend.

Kathleen didn't conceal her delight when she shook hands to welcome him. After enjoying her cake and coffee with goat's milk, delicacies rarely available in this barren region, Bethune elaborated on his mission.

"I come from a family of evangelists, too. I am something

of a missionary myself. You say you are here to serve God. You want to save men's souls that they may have a future life in heaven. I want to save them for life on earth. Wouldn't you agree that the roads we are traveling run in the same direction? For my purposes, for what I want to talk to you about, that's enough."

"Your purpose?" Kathleen kept calm. She had the reputation among the villagers as having the same personality as Norman: dedicated to serving others, extremely hard-working, intolerant of laziness, and outspoken.

"There is something crying out to be done here, and for the moment you are the only person I can think of to do it," continued Bethune. "You know how terribly lacking we are in medical supplies. We are blockaded on every side.... I have to operate on the wounded without gloves, sometimes without proper drugs and antiseptics. We have to wait weeks and months for arrangements to smuggle them to us. And while we wait, the wounded suffer and die needlessly. That's where you can help. As a missionary, you can get to Peking without being stopped. And as a missionary, you will be allowed to buy supplies and bring them back here... Will you do it?"

Kathleen remained silent for a long time, and then she said: "I cannot take part in war. I am against killing. I am in charge of this mission; I am supposed to be neutral."

"I am not asking you to take part in the war. I am asking you to do something that will save men's lives."

Their conversation lasted deep into night. The next morning she went to the village where Bethune had his model hospital and said, "I have decided to go to Beijing."

"You understand that it will be dangerous? For yourself and for your mission?"

"Yes. But hardly as dangerous as what you do. I am sure now it is God's will...."

When she had gone, Bethune wrote in his diary: "I have met an angel... Kathleen, of the Anglican Church Mission here.... She will go to Peking, buy medical supplies, and bring them

back to her mission—for us! If she isn't an angel, what does the word mean?"³

IV.

The cold beginning of winter arrived with the Japanese occupation of the Wutai Mountains. The model hospital built by Norman and his Chinese comrades was flattened by artillery two months after its birth. The communist-led 8th Route Army had to retreat to search for a new base.

Climbing up the snow-covered peaks with his medical clinic on a mule's back, Norman stopped his horse and looked back, searching for the mission fort hidden in snowflakes. It had been quite a while since Kathleen had left for Peking and there had been no news from her. Had she arrived safely? Was she able to complete the dangerous task?

Everybody had noticed the frequent visits between the two during the fall season; there was a rumor that the two English speakers might be in love. Why not? When asked by his Chinese friends, Bethune laughed out loud. He denied the charge: it was wartime and there was no space for romance.

In the new base, like before, Bethune operated in a shabby Buddhist temple, with a 20-foot statue of the impassive god staring over his shoulder. The interior had been prepared as a makeshift ward. Strips of white cloth covered the walls; a hissing gas lamp suspended from the ceiling cast a dull light. The smell of smoke and explosives from the bombed village filtered in with the salty smell of blood....

For ten hours Bethune worked on the casualties, without anesthesia and at a relentless pace, while machine-gun fire came closer and moved away. Shells sent tremors through the temple, and daylight at last crept in through the shattered windows. It was midmorning when Bethune splashed cold water on his face and went out, his feet unsteady, his eyes blinking at the sun. The enemy force had been wiped out in the wheat

³ See Ted Allen & Sydney Gordon, *The Scalpel, the Sword: The Story of Doctor Norman Bethune*. Revised Edition, McClelland and Stewart, 1971, p. 270.

fields a mile away. He had operated for 69 hours on 115 casualties.⁴

One night, two loaded mules arrived in the small village. Bethune rushed out of the temple and looked around for his “angel”. She didn’t appear but had sent the needed supplies with a letter.

Dear Dr. Bethune:

I left for Peking the day after I saw you, as planned. Everything went smoothly on the journey. I reached the beautiful ancient oriental city after two days’ travel. I regret that you weren’t with me, for I could have acted as your guide and taken you to all the famous places that I am sure you would be delighted to see.

The day after I arrived I went to the big dispensary on Morrison Street with your list. Because of the large quantities I wanted, they refused to sell me anything. It was obvious the Japanese are working with might and main to prevent anything of military importance, including medicine, from getting out of the occupied area. I found medical supplies could only be sold on an official permit issued by the enemy authorities. Retail supplies can be bought without the permit, but I found that if I tried to purchase everything retail, I would probably have to spend half a year collecting everything you want.

Fortunately I have a friend in Beijing who superintends a hospital and is one of our believers. He obtained the permit for me in the name of the hospital. With it I was able to get from the dispensary whatever I wanted, except for some things that were out of stock... the latter I obtained the next day at Ha Ta men, where there was a branch of Germany’s Bayer company.... I can imagine how happy you must be to hear that I procured everything you wanted, and exhausting though it was, I was

⁴ Ibid., 286.

glad to be able to do it for you.

Later I spent my time transacting some business for our church. I know you will smile at this. I can hear you saying that buying the medical supplies was surely also a matter of serving God and the church. I don't object to your saying so. Let us agree that serving you is part of serving the church....

I visited all your friends in the city you asked me to see. When they heard my description of what you are doing in this part of the country, they were surprised at first, then delighted, then all expressed a desire to see you and talk to you. J— even asked whether he could come with me to participate in your noble work. Not knowing what you would think of it, I could only promise that I would bring him back with me on my next trip to Peking

The letter went on to describe the brush with Japanese soldiers and the puppet police on her return trip, how she succeeded in convincing them the medical supplies were for use at her mission, and her stay in occupied towns on her way back into free territory. It continued:

I was intercepted by an official who informed me had had instructions to pick up the supplies from me and forward them to you. That I did, although I would have preferred to hand them over to you personally. However, you travel so extensively that I thought it better to do as asked. So I am sending this letter with a list of all the items....

I think I have come to understand the significance of your work. Understanding it, I am anxious to share in it. It is a noble work, and whatever service I can render it will make me happy. May God bring swift punishment to the evil men who have caused all this suffering. You have said with truth that that would be the great-

est blessing the Lord could bestow upon His children.

I will pray for you before God tonight.

Yours sincerely, Kathleen.⁵

Reading this long letter, I felt the pulse of strong emotion in the lines, though not a single word of love was found. Norman had again proved irresistible, drawing her into his orbit. What might have been in Norman's mind as he read this letter? Perhaps his tired heart was soothed by a gentle touch of feminine affection.

Later he explained to his Chinese friend, "Among Christians there is rejoicing in heaven whenever a soul is saved. Tonight I rejoice on earth, for our army has won a wonderful recruit. She came to China to convert others to her Christian faith. And as a Christian she has herself become a convert of our army. Isn't it an interesting thought that our troops are bringing heaven and earth closer together?"

I searched in the book for more traces of the admirable woman, but found only one sentence, stating that her mission fort was burned to the ground after the Japanese army took over the area that winter. What happened to Kathleen?

V.

In the summer of 2012, I travelled to the holy Buddhist lands of the Wutai Mountains and saw the valleys and hills decorated with hundreds of temples shining with glazed tiles, amid burning incense and chanted prayers. There was no trace of the model hospital nor anything left of the huge mission fort. I searched in vain for a slim figure flying along the mountain trail accompanied by a yellow dog. I saw an apparition of the young Kathleen and the eloquent Norman gazing at each other, joyfully debating.

There was no doubt that the bitter frustration that had built up in Norman in Canada was eased after his arrival in the mys-

⁵ Ibid., 288.

terious land of China. In letters sent home, he described his excitement.

Life here is pretty rough and sometimes pretty tough. But I am enjoying it. I am tired, but I don't think I have been so happy for a long time. I am content. I am doing what I want to do. And see what my riches consist of! I have vital work that occupies every moment of my time. I am needed. More than that – to satisfy my bourgeois vanity – the need for me is expressed.

I have no money or the need for it. I have the inestimable good fortune to be among and to work among people to whom communism is a way of life, not merely a way of talking and thinking. Their communism is simple and profound, reflex as a knee jerk, unconscious as the movement of their lungs and automatic as the beating of the heart. They are implacable in their hate, world-embracing in their love.

The stoic Chinese indeed! Here I have found comrades who belong to the very hierarchy of humanity. They have seen cruelty, yet know gentleness; they have tasted bitterness, yet know how to smile; they have endured vast suffering, yet know patience, optimism, quiet wisdom. I have come to love them; I know they love me too.⁶

In the model hospital he built, Bethune taught the local carpenters and blacksmiths how to make medical equipment, drawing charts and waving a hammer. He cut empty gas tanks into pieces and taught people how to turn them into drinking cups and urine containers. He showed village wives how to sew cotton pads with a hole in the middle for the patients.

“He doesn't eat enough and he does not sleep enough, yet he does the work of ten men,” his Chinese comrades recalled.

The monthly allowances for soldiers and officials in the communist army were from one to four dollars, with Mao Ze-

⁶ Ibid., 214.

dong on top receiving five. Bethune was entitled to 100 yuan, but he never accepted the special privilege. He ate the same food as all soldiers did: boiled millet and plain vegetable soup.

Seeing him so exhausted and skinny, the chef once prepared a dish of scrambled eggs for Norman alone. The doctor lost his temper at this special treatment and distributed the hard-to-get, nutritious food among the patients, feeding each of them a mouthful.

VI.

It is not hard to understand why Norman's wife, Frances Penney, twice divorced the man she had married. Story has it that she once opened the fridge to take out meat to cook but found human internal organs the doctor kept there instead.

Their first divorce reveals to me the noble nature of the man. After diagnosed with TB, incurable as cancer in the 1920s, Norman asked for the divorce and encouraged Francis to develop a new relationship with a man more suitable for her. However, this new man was not interested in becoming a father after she became pregnant. Upon receiving her SOS, Norman drove hundreds of miles to conduct the abortion for her. Such a complicated spousal relationship would be hard to understand for readers in China, but would add weight to their respect for the hero. When Norman was dying, he did not forget to ask his friends to look after his ex-spouse.

I should like you to ask the China Aid Council to remit some money to my divorced wife, on my behalf – perhaps in installments. My responsibility to her is undeniable, and I cannot leave her cut off simply because I myself have no money. Tell her that I have been very happy.⁷

Bethune cut his finger in an exhausting operation and it became infected. No gloves. No antibiotics. The medical supplies delivered by Kathleen were long gone. The experience of wait-

⁷ Ibid., 312.

ing for death was a fearful one. When his mind was still clear, Norman typed a will dividing his belongings, from a pair of leather shoes to an alarm clock and a stainless spoon.

Kathleen still occupied a place in his mind: "Express my warmest thanks to Miss Hall for the assistance she has rendered us."

Finally he wrote:

Give my everlasting love to Tim Buck and all my Canadian and American friends. Tell them I have been very happy. My only regret is that I shall now be unable to do more. The last two years have been the most significant, the most meaningful years of my life. Sometimes it has been lonely, but I have found my highest fulfillment here among my beloved comrades. I have no strength now to write more.... To you and to all my comrades, a thousand thanks.⁸

The communists in Shanghai had secured some antibiotics through the city's crime syndicate and, passing through layers of blockades, had finally brought the medicine to northern China where Bethune was dying. Norman turned down the precious medicine and asked that it be kept for the wounded soldiers. Then he closed his eyes forever.

For five days, people carried his thin body on a stretcher along the mountain trails in the cold winter air as villagers bid him farewell. Hundreds of weeping people followed the stretcher, sending their beloved doctor off on his last journey on earth.

When news reached Yan'an, the communist headquarters in North China, Mao Zedong was deeply touched. He wrote the famous article "In Memory of Dr. Norman Bethune," a tribute that became a monument in the heart of the Chinese people forever.

...Comrade Bethune and I met only once. Afterwards he wrote me many letters. But I was too busy, and I wrote him only one letter and do not even know if he

⁸ Ibid., 312.

ever received it. I am deeply grieved over his death..... Now we are all commemorating him, which shows how profoundly his spirit inspires everyone. We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

VII.

On November 12, 2009, the day marking the seventieth anniversary of Norman Bethune's death, the Confucius Institutes in Waterloo, Ontario and in Quebec organized a symposium in Montreal, inviting scholars from different fields to talk about the many aspects of the medical doctor, enriching his image as a respectable but also a real human being.

Dr. Deslaurier talked about his excellent contributions to medical science. Dr. Judith Miller discussed his talents and insights as an artist. Prof. David Lethbridge examined his childhood, using psychological analyses, and one presenter mentioned his literary effort as shown in a short story published in an American magazine about a Chinese peasant's life.

I read an episode taken from my recently finished novel, *Lily in the Snow*. The plot is based on an argument about the last words uttered by Norman Bethune before his heart stopped beating, which remain a mystery till this day. My reading left a number of the people in the audience weeping.

After lunch, the conference attendees walked to the centre of Montreal where a statue of the hero stands by a busy street. One by one, we laid flowers at the foot of the statue, observed by many curious passersby. I was overwhelmed with sadness, reflecting on the lonely moment when the hero was lying in a small mud house far away from home, waiting to die.

He was a Christ figure, serving others and setting an ex-

ample by which to measure our own footprints and question the meaning of life.

VIII.

In the fall of 2012, I visited the old lumber town Gravenhurst, Ontario, the birthplace of my hero. The old manse stood among blooming white lilies, looking simple, neat and clean. Through the century, it has been painted different colours: cream, pink, yellow, and light green, reflecting the various interpretations of Bethune which grew up after his death. What remained unchanged were the old maple trees shading the front yard, silently welcoming guests from afar.

I felt him with me as I stood in the room laid out the way it had been when Norman was a boy, and I saw the black wagon he used to sit in with his parents, the lake he had loved to swim in, and the hills where he had chased butterflies. The caretaker informed me that the memorial house had been set up for visitors in the 1970s with funds from the Chinese government. More than ninety percent of the visitors were from China and five percent from Spain. To the local residents, the communist doctor meant very little, even less than his parents, the Presbyterian Church minister who abandoned the luxuries of the city to serve the poor parish with his powerful sermons and dedication.

The visit confirmed my suspicion that a true Christian can easily be turned into a true communist. I am sure that Norman's road to internationalism started right from his birth in that lumber town. At sunset, I bade farewell to the quiet house and lit some incense in my heart for the man who genuinely deserves love and respect, alive or dead.

IX.

My story about the hero in his homeland was published in a major journal in Beijing the next year (2013). The story brought

me an encounter with a group of retired army officers in Beijing who worked together to promote the spirit of Norman Bethune.

From the officers I learned that the sole picture of Norman Bethune with Mao Zedong was in Canada. This was exciting indeed, since not a single picture of the two men together was on file in any archives in China or abroad, although everybody knew that they had met in Yan'an in 1938, as indicated in Mao's famous article and numerous paintings on the theme.

I was shown a copy of the photo. Bethune and Mao, still young then with a Red Army hat, were sitting side by side in a cave-like room. Mao was looking ahead, hands holding his chin, as if listening to someone attentively, unaware that the foreign man beside him had asked someone to take the picture using the Kodak camera he brought to China.

How did this valuable photo become known? I learned that the owner of the photo was a senior citizen, Bill Smith, who lived in London, Ontario, Canada. Bethune had sent many letters from China to Bill's mother, Lilian, including this picture. Bill had shown this picture to a new immigrant from China who eventually brought the news to Beijing.

The officers wanted to meet with Bill but the Chinese go-between seemed to have vanished. I was asked to help locate the mysterious Bill Smith. London is only a hundred kilometers from Waterloo where I live. The internet proved to be an efficient tool. I quickly found the news story published almost two years earlier: "Local Bethune Items China-bound?" James Reaney, a reporter for The London Free Press, wrote it on May 3, 2012.

London archivist and retired activist Bill Smith carefully unfolds a rare letter from Norman Bethune to Smith's mother. At left, one of Smith's rare photos, dated May 1, 1938, shows Bethune, left, and Mao Zedong in China. Smith, whose parents were friends with the revered Canadian doctor, is seeking to sell his associated documents to China, where Bethune is widely celebrated.

The material is from the personal collection of Smith's parents, who were friends and Communist allies of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame doctor.

The collection includes a rare photograph of Bethune and Mao Zedong apparently taken on May 1, 1938. Mao was leading the Communist army in its battles against the Japanese invaders.

"At that time, Mao was living in a cave," Smith says.

Smith's parents and Bethune had become friends and allies through Canada's Communist circles. Smith's father was a Canadian labour journalist who commanded the Canadian contingent, which fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

"My father (Edward Paul Cecil-Smith) was the third leader because the other two were killed before him," Smith says of the Canadians' war against Franco's fascists. Ed Smith's friend, Bethune, was also in Spain, working as a doctor. On leave from Spain, Bethune encountered Smith's mother, Lilian Gouge. Earlier, he had treated her for tuberculosis, using techniques he had first devised in his own case.

"It was mother who convinced Bethune to go to China," Bill Smith says. "The action isn't in Spain. It's in China," Lilian – "Lil" to Bethune – told the doctor.

Ed Smith's father had been born in China, where the Smith family had Anglican ties. Those Smith connections helped Bethune into the war zone.

Bethune arrived in 1938 to aid Mao's forces. In 1939, he cut his finger while operating on a soldier and contracted blood poisoning. He died soon after.

Bethune is revered in China as “The Light Who Pursues Kindness.” He was named the 26th Greatest Canadian by CBC-TV viewers in 2004.

In China, which commemorates Bethune at a far higher level than here in Canada, there are hospitals, universities, art galleries, museums and statues dedicated to his memory.

A few months before his death, Bethune wrote to Bill Smith’s mother, at a time he was writing to other friends and allies like the Canadian Communist leader Tim Buck. Bethune wrote he hoped to leave in November on his fund-raising trip.

“He never made it,” Bill Smith says.

Now, Smith is set to oversee the return of his family’s Bethune heritage to the country where the doctor is revered.⁹

I could not wait a minute and phoned the reporter right away. Assisted by James Reaney, I finally obtained contacts for Bill Cecil-Smith. A couple of months later, I made my way to his century-old house in the heart of London and was able to have a face-to-face chat with this mysterious man.

X.

Bill had recently had a car accident and was on painkillers. He bent over, frowning, and took out a brown paper bag from under the tea table. Hands shaking, he carefully unfolded the broken envelope, showing me the address in Toronto on the upper left corner and the contents inside. “They were like this when I found them in the 1970s.”

I looked attentively at the faded grayish letter, with holes from wear. Wrapped inside was the black and white photo. On

⁹ See James Reaney, “Local Bethune Items China-bound?” *The London Free Press*, 3 May 2012.

the back of the photo was Bethune's handwriting, blurred but recognizable:

*Mao Tse Tung
And
Bethune
Yenan
May 1/38*

I spread the fragile letter on the table to read under the lamp light.

Chin-Cha-Chi Military District

West Hopei, North China, Aug. 15/39

Darling –

I have scattered letters all over the map for you – in Yenan, in Peiping, in the hopes that you could pick them up. But it seems that you never have.

In March and May I had also sent to you from Peiping directing you to come there. Our place is easily reached in 2 days from that city, but the only reply that my contact obtained was “no funds available.” Then some missionaries were returning to Canada and a sympathizer sent word with them. All this time (last spring and summer) I was over in mid Hopei where we were out of touch for months at time owing to being completely surrounded by the enemy.

Now I am coming home for a few months. I need a lot of money for my work. I am not getting it. I don't know where the money from Canada and America is going. My Medical Training School here with 200 doctors in training needs at least \$1000 (gold) a month to run.

I am leaving here in November and should be home at

the end of February 1940. It's a long trip south. I have sent you a cable not to come but to wait in Canada. I must work in here and if you are of the same mind, you can come back with me next year. Your last letter came 7 months ago. Since then, no word of any kind from Canada or America.

God, it's been a long time. I'm tired and pretty thin, worn too. Perhaps you won't like your old man!

Good bye, darling.

Beth

Love, as indicated by the word "darling", was obvious. No wonder that an angel like Kathleen failed to occupy Bethune's heart in a romantic way, even though he was lonely and most vulnerable then. I felt heavy-hearted. When Norman was writing this letter, he never anticipated that two months later – the time he had planned to return home – he would be staying forever in the land to which he had dedicated himself.

Bill showed me another photo of Bethune. Though he was already bald, his cheeks were full and there was a gentleness in his eyes, quite different from the many worn-looking images of him working among peasants and soldiers in China. On the back of this photo he had written:

*To Lil,
with love
from Beth
Hong Kong
Feb. 6/38*

Obviously, the picture was taken at the threshold of his one-way journey into China.

"If he sent many letters to your mother, why is there only one?" I asked.

"Maybe my mother didn't keep them. Even the last letter, with Mao's photo, was found in her belongings only after she passed away."

"Did your father know about the relationship between your mother and Norman?" How could Edward Cecil-Smith, another legendary figure in Canadian history, accept the ambiguity between his wife and his comrade-in-arms? Or maybe the couple was already on bad terms?

Bill gazed at the shrubs outside of the window, to avoid my stare, perhaps. "I have no idea what had happened to my parents' generation and I don't want to guess. My mother never told me anything about her relationship with Bethune, which would be embarrassing. You can understand that." With a shrug, he added, "All I know is that I was an accident. My mother was a TB patient. At that time, TB was almost the same as cancer, not curable." (Bethune once declared that there were two types of TB, one for the rich who got treated, and one for the poor who waited to die.)

"My mother was his patient. He removed one side of her lungs. You can imagine that a woman with only half a lung, so weak and vulnerable, would have no desire to give birth to babies."

Was she secretly planning to join Norman? Perhaps, after receiving the heart-breaking news from China, Lilian finally abandoned her dream of a romantic reunion and chose to spend the rest of her life like any other woman.

XI.

Bill was born in March 1942 in Toronto. His childhood memories go back to the age of four. The family's red brick house was built by his grandfather during World War II, its exquisite doors and windows and smart design recording the talents of a master carpenter who came to Canada from England to build Casa Loma in the early twentieth century.

Not long ago, Bill visited the area of his childhood home,

only to find that the red brick house had disappeared, replaced by a “cheaply built high rise with no taste at all.” His mood was happier when talking about his grandfather. George Cecil-Smith was sent to China by the British Inland Mission in 1890 and he was the Bishop of Guizhou Province in southern China.

“The Chinese called him Mr. G.” Bill showed me a photo taken in 1910 in the missionary compound. His gray-bearded grandfather, wearing a Chinese robe, and his grandmother, dressed like the local ladies beside her, posed with a crowd of Chinese converts in an old-style wooden house.

“My grandma was Australian. She went to China as a missionary and met my grandfather there. I have never seen them. They both died in China in the 1940s during the war.” The only memory of his grandmother was a Teddy Bear she sent as a birthday gift in 1943.

Bill’s father was born in the missionary compound in 1901. Brought up by the Chinese servants, he learned to speak the local dialect even before he learned English. In the mid-1920s, he immigrated to Canada where he became a reporter for a working-class journal in Montreal.

“When did your father become a communist? Was it after his arrival in Canada?”

“He became a communist when he was studying at a university in Shanghai, China,” said Bill. Another example of a Christian-cultivated communist hero.

“My father defined himself as a writer and soldier. In the 1930s, my parents were victims of Canadian government policy for their beliefs. A play, *Eight Men Speak*, co-authored by my father, was the only play banned in those days. My mother was also persecuted for organizing workers to perform Shakespeare plays. Some plays were satirical.”

I searched online and found information on *Eight Men Speak*, a play created in 1933 and banned after its first performance. The play tells of the imprisonment of Tim Buck, the General Secretary of the Canadian Communist Party, and the attempt to assassinate him in jail. He and his seven comrades were tried and put in jail for their beliefs. Social pressure finally led to the

release of Tim Buck and his comrades.¹⁰

“The play had been out of print for a long time,” noted Bill. “I was glad to hear that the University of Ottawa Press published a new version last year.”

In 1936, after the Spanish Civil War erupted, Edward led the Canadian Red Army to Spain in support of the Republicans.

“Yes, it was called the Red Army,” Bill confirmed and showed me a few photos. One shows Edward lying on a stretcher, with other wounded Canadian soldiers beside him. They all look very young. Another shows Norman in a long winter coat, squatting by a pool, trying to put something in the water. Bill explained that Norman had invented a mobile blood transfusion system for the Spanish battlefields, and he had to store the newly collected blood in wine bottles in a cold stream since there was no refrigeration to keep it fresh.

Norman and Edward had become friends when he worked as a surgeon in Montreal. Norman had the highest income in the hospital and lived a spendthrift life, with wine parties and expensive clothing, surrounded by books and artist friends. Such a lifestyle was interrupted when the depression left tens of thousands of people in poverty. Norman saw poor people dying without medical care and recognized the dark side of the capitalist system.

When Edward led the Canadian Red Army to Spain, Norman joined the brigade as a medical team leader. Among the 1500 Canadians that enlisted, between 400 and 700 Canadians died.

After Norman was recalled home from Spain, he decided to go to China to support the resistance against the Japanese invasion, on the advice of Lilian.

“My mother told him: China needs help. You should go to China.” Bill said.

“Many people in China have read in Norman’s will that he wanted to leave the large Japanese Army flag to Lilian, but nobody knew who Lilian was!” I said.

¹⁰ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight_Men_Speak

"Oh, really?" Bill's eyes lit up. "I never knew this."

It was in Norman's last letter to Tim Buck. Why didn't he tell Lilian? On second thought, I realized the complications. Perhaps both Lilian and Edward might have chosen to remain anonymous.

"My mother was one of the proofreaders of the book *The Scalpel, the Sword*. But she didn't give her name. In the 1950s, the white terror scared everyone." For the rest of her life, Lilian lived as a recluse in that red brick Toronto house till she passed away in 1977.

When going through his mother's things, Bill found an old wooden box, finely engraved in black lacquer with exquisite landscape paintings. The two Chinese characters on it indicated its origin from the missionary compound in southern China. He opened it and found only one thing: a worn out envelope containing a letter and the photo of Mao and Bethune.

Staring at the worn letter, I told myself that the woman was lucky. She must have enjoyed a luxurious inner world in her silent decades before she passed away.

"My mother had a high school education and worked in different organizations as an administrative clerk. She was very gentle, nice, and caring to everyone. Her whole family was like that. I grew up in a loving environment."

Bill was not clear when his parents got married. There was no historical record left, he said. I wondered if, as young revolutionaries, the couple might simply have ignored the regular procedures.

"When did your mother meet Bethune?"

"It might be in the early 1930s," Bill recalled. "What a pity I never asked her...."

Brought to another world along with Lilian, I guess, might be a collection of letters from the mountain villages in northern China. Future generations will never know the full story, beautiful or sad.

XII.

I invited Bill to have dinner with us and asked his preferences. Not surprisingly, he chose Chinese food, particularly the hot-sour spicy style of southwestern China familiar from his childhood. As we walked out of the restaurant, he commented that it was the first time he had been to this famous Chinese restaurant. He noted that he did not like the Japanese paintings on the walls. A picture of a Japanese army flag, stained with gunpowder, filled my mind. To Lilian.

XIII.

In the fall, I informed Bill that the Bethune Spirit Research Association of China would like to pay him a visit. Bill responded quickly, saying that he was recovering and could drive to Waterloo to talk with me in detail. He arrived the following week. He entered the cafeteria with difficulty, still using a cane, and with an old canvas bag across his shoulder. The bag had caught his eye twenty years ago in a flea market in London. He had seen such bags used by Canadian soldiers in the old photos left by his father.

"I got it for twenty dollars and ever since I have carried it wherever I go," he said. Bill firmly turned down my offer to treat him to lunch. "No, I am not hungry and I do not need to eat anything. People must be equal in order to get along. I don't want to accept your treat again."

"My dream is to have 500 dollars a month before I die," he continued. "My pension is not enough. I have to rent out two bedrooms in my house. And the house is old and needs to be renovated. I have no money to do this, and therefore I must sell my parents' belongings, things I have kept for decades.

"If you want to promote the spirit represented by Norman Bethune, your whole life is ruined. If someone hated you or was jealous of you, he could simply label you as a communist. Then you could not find a job and people avoided you like

the plague. The police watched closely to find out who was a communist. After a few decades, my parents and I had had enough! We had to remain silent under such pressure, or we would not be able to find any work to survive."

Mentioning his ex-wife, Bill's voice became soft. She was a social worker and they had one daughter. When she could no longer bear living in poverty, fifteen years ago, she left with their nine-year old, leaving him in an even worse situation.

"The law in Canada is not in favor of men," Bill said with a dry smile. "But she is a nice woman and made the right decision." Bill reminded me that his ex-wife was a Mennonite who shared his socialist ideologies. Some believe that Marxism was inspired by Mennonite practices in Europe.

"As a matter of fact, I retreated from politics 30 years ago. I stopped organizing people to demonstrate and sign petitions and so on. Being unemployed just became too hard." Bill had taught in colleges when he was young. When nobody dared to hire him, he tried to start his own businesses in construction and solar equipment, etc., but he went bankrupt, probably because of little talent in capitalist endeavors.

"After all this, do you still regard yourself as a communist?"

"Of course! I have set up a communist branch in London. We have eight people, all men. They are university instructors, computer programmers, and graduate students. I am the only old man!" He laughed. "We meet twice a month in my house on Sunday morning to read books and discuss them. It is more like a book club than a party organization."

"What kind of books do you read?"

"Theories about Marxism, of course, such as the book by Professor David Harvey of the City University of New York." Bill started to read Marxist works in the 1960s when he was at university. These included imported books and magazines such as *Beijing Review* and *China Reconstruct*.

"I still have the issue with the coverage of Mao's death in 1976. All kept in my basement. But some stuff was lost, including Bethune's cigar lighter. I moved many times, you know."

"There is no doubt you are the son of Edward," I said. He

laughed heartily.

Seeing him relax, I changed the subject. "Please tell me honestly what your expectation is. I will try my best to help. I would be very happy to purchase this photo and the letter and donate them to a proper place in China for display."

Bill shook his head. "You could not afford it. Of course, there are other things besides the photo and the letter. There are many pictures from the Spanish battlefields and swords my father used in an Ottawa parade before leaving Canada for Spain. There is also a beautifully embroidered Chinese robe from the Qing Dynasty from my grandfather. I need to sell all these as a package to get money for the rest of my life."

I told him that I would arrange for the Chinese delegation to meet with him and discuss the possibility of purchasing his collection. I consulted with Dr. Gail Cuthbert Brandt, a historian and a former vice-president of the University of Waterloo, showing her the photos Bill had left with me. She recognized at a glance the image of Bethune with "the young Mao." She advised that I should first try to keep the historical treasures in Canada.

"Canadians do not seem to care, since the news was published two years ago and nobody showed any interest in purchasing the things," I said. "As for the Chinese, I am sure they will only be interested in the picture with Mao on it. Bethune is significant to the Chinese people since the spirit represented by him functions almost like a religion in China where religion has always been weak."

By that time, I had learned that my identification of the similarities between Christianity and communist ideology was nothing novel. The late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau focused his graduate studies on a similar topic in the 1940s as a student in the USA and Europe.

XIV.

Two weeks later, Bill and I met the delegation from China at a Toronto hotel. Bill found a free spot to park his old car behind

the hotel, and pointing at the blanket on the flattened car seats, he said happily, "It is very comfortable and costs no money." He showed me his newly cut hair.

The meeting was polite, but the issue of money was avoided. After the delegates returned to China, I received an email message from their head. He expressed their admiration for Bill's efforts in keeping the treasures and their sympathy for his economic status. However, he regretted that the organization is a non-profit one and could not afford the price expected by Bill. The letter ended with a subtle suggestion that Bill should donate that picture for free.

No, that would be impossible. Had he any other way to survive, I am sure he would rather keep all the precious memories from his parents. Dr. Cuthbert Brandt's advice was also hard to respond to.

For days I stared at the gifts Bill had given me: two old red buttons with the words, "Reds Care" and "Question Authority", souvenirs from his past. Finally I decided to write the story and get it published in China, in the hope that some wealthy person would help Bill. When I visited Beijing in mid-December, my story was accepted by *People's Literature* magazine, the most widely read one in China.

At a dinner in Beijing I met Ms. Geng Ying, the chair of the China Culture Heritage Foundation. After hearing my story, she decided right away to meet Bill's terms for the treasure. As I had anticipated, the Chinese were interested mainly in the picture and the letter.

Ms. Geng Ying handled the matter in typical Chinese style, shown in her careful wording: "Please tell Bill that we will express our thanks not only by providing a financial compensation for his donation but will also treat him like a distinguished guest. Please bring him with you to China when we celebrate the 70th anniversary marking the end of WW II and the 75th Anniversary of the death of Norman Bethune in Beijing next fall."

Postscript

On September 9, 2015, coincidentally the thirty-ninth anniversary of Mao's death, the Canadian team arrived in Beijing to attend the international symposium "In Memory of Dr. Norman Bethune."

In the Golden Hall of the Beijing Hotel, next to the Tiananmen Gate, Bill Cecil-Smith stepped onto the stage with the photograph and the letter, amid warm applause from an audience of more than a thousand. The moment marked the conclusion of Bill's efforts to locate the proper place in the world to keep the treasures he had carefully protected for 76 years, over two generations.

It dawned on me at that moment why I had chosen to come to Canada decades ago. The mysterious mission sent by God was now completed.

Two days later, however, when the Canadian delegation made its pilgrimage to the mountain area where Bethune had worked, I felt regret for publishing my story too early.

We paid tribute to the original mausoleum of Norman Bethune, harbored in the hills. After laying yellow and white chrysanthemums at his marble statue, I found the smaller tomb, next to him, of Jean Ewen. She was a Canadian nurse sent to China on the same boat with Norman Bethune in 1938, since she had learned to speak Chinese as a Catholic missionary in China.

Jean spent a few months in north China with Norman. It might have been the intolerable living conditions or the doctor's bad temper, but whatever it was, she left without telling him and returned to Canada for the rest of her life. However, before she passed away in 1987, Jean left a will asking her children to send her ashes back to China. I surmised that as a Christian, she must have felt guilt for leaving the doctor alone in China to face the hardships and the tragedy of his death.

The villagers called our attention to the mountain facing Bethune's statue. The silhouette of the mountain was striking-

ly similar to the sleeping hero, an image deeply carved in our minds. The villagers told me that Kathleen Hall was buried on that same mountain. After she passed away in 1970 in New Zealand, some of her ashes were sent to the Chinese village, as she wished.

During the trip, I picked up the missing thread in her story. After Kathleen had helped the Chinese army purchase medical supplies repeatedly in 1939, the Japanese burned down her church clinic and put her under house arrest in Beijing. The Anglican Church negotiated for her to leave China, but she stayed in Hong Kong, waiting for a chance to come back. News was completely blocked. She worried all the time that Norman had no idea of her whereabouts and might think that she had abandoned him!

In early 1940, Kathleen finally found her way back into China. On her journey, however, she learned the sad news of Norman's death. She was heart-broken.

During the trip, I also got access to another letter from Norman to Lilian. It was a long one, written shortly after he arrived in Northern China. He described in detail what kind of jobs she could do in the mountain village and urged her to come and join him.

On December 14, 2015, after I finished my presentation at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, Ambassador Guy Saint-Jacques asked, "What about the Japanese Army flag? Was it returned to Lilian?"

Re-reading Mao on Bethune: Fifty Years Later

Chengzhi Zhang

I. A Glimpse of a Photo

I saw a rare photo of Bethune when I visited a friend at his home not long ago.

I was quite taken aback. Some words came to my mind instantly, "He arrived in Yen-an in the spring of last year..."

It was taken in Yen-an. An awesome picture of Bethune and Mao Zedong together within the same frame! They seemed watching some performance, concentrating their attention respectively...

Due to the limited shooting conditions eighty years ago as well as the submergence of time for eighty years, this rare



photo was blurred – however, this was the only picture that snatched the moment of that century and caught the two great men together at the same time.

It was long afterwards that I came to realize that the thirties of the 20th century was a sparkling moment of historical significance. The international fighters shouldering world duties and the revolutionary soldiers fighting invaders and for liberation are both proud sons in history, no matter whether they were praised or smirched by public opinions.

What performance were they watching?

What did they talk about?

Did Bethune, a fighter who came to the Taihang Mountains from the forefront of the Spanish Civil War – a symbol of safeguarding world justice – tell Chairman Mao about the generation that rebuffed capitalism, and about the world revolutionaries who were imbued with broad minds and extraordinary zeal and zest?

Similarly, how did Mao Zedong express himself to Bethune, having been engrossed in the emancipation of Asia, inspired by “*New Youth*,” fought bloody battles in wild mountains and barracks, and enriched his mind in North Shanxi? That moment was so precious! Mao Zedong and Bethune ... Hard to tear myself away from it, I took a picture of the blurring photo, only to find later that it was superfluous: the internet is filled with this photo of Bethune and Mao Zedong, with relevant inscriptions, memoirs and discussions.

I was told that the photo was contributed to China by a descendant of Bethune’s girlfriend and it was said to be cold-shouldered then. I thought it was inevitable. The ignorance of the world led to indifference and amnesia of the moments of other people’s enthusiasm and justice.

When I was a teenager I memorized Bethune’s name. However, memorization cannot offset ignorance. Until now I could not imagine the two of them ever sitting shoulder to shoulder. It was inconceivable to me when I glanced at their sitting together.

Today I have come to realize Bethune’s boundless inner

meaning. I can imagine now that his meeting with Mao Zedong would have certainly given him sparks of inspiration.

II. "People of the Thirties"

I was thinking this way long after I took a glimpse of that photo.

My line of thought was not put in order until Nihui, the author of the book *When the World was Young — the Chinese who Took Part in the Spanish Civil War* held a press conference in Beijing.

It then dawned on me that in order to understand Bethune, who the whole of China was memorizing in the Cultural Revolution, we have to know about his engagement in the anti-Fascist front in Spain before "he made light of travelling thousands of miles to China."

The fascist rebels' attack against the Republic of Spain in 1936 exasperated all the progressive fighters in the world. They started epic international actions, with pens and with guns, disregarding blood-shedding or disasters, and giving up their life of ease and comfort. To take part in the war in Spain was a great event in contemporary world history.

On the list of fighters were myriads of renowned figures. Hemingway, who wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was only one of them. Some writings mark the origin of the world left-wing and progress to that period of time, and name those international warriors who sacrifice themselves "people of 1936." Perhaps Bethune could be better called "a person of 1938" based on his resume? Accordingly, I choose to call that generation "people of the Thirties."

The period of time during the fierce conflicts in history, the slogans "Defend the Republic," "Safeguard Madrid" were the strong voices in the century resounding all over the globe. I still remember reading Huang Renyu's writing, querying the Shanghai people's attitude (including Lu Xun's) toward the "January 28th Incident" during the Anti-Japanese War, was it based on the battles safeguarding Madrid? Just a few days ago,

I found in an exhibition in Hankou that a song popular in 1938 "Defend Greater Wuhan," they sang: "We'll firmly defend it, just as the Spanish people defended Madrid."

It seems that the Chinese people during the War of Resistance against Japan were familiar with the Spanish Civil War.

Traveling in Spain, people would be shocked by the trauma left to people by the civil war and the nightmarish memory left by that era.

The Spanish movies popular on the internet, such as "The Hive Spectre," "Heart-breaking Melody of the Trumpet," "Kids' Ghost House," "Anarchist's Wife," "Freedom and Land" ... So many films, from children's visual angles, were defending the Republicans, especially those attempting to sharply expose the fascists. So many famous intellectuals got involved or entangled deeply in the Spanish Civil War, such as Neruda, a poet, Robert Capa, a photographer, Evans, a film master, Hemingway, a writer and Picasso, an artist, as well as Chinese fighters joining in the struggle, such as Chen Wenxiao from New York and Xie Weijin from Switzerland. Their actions show that the world cherished their memory and their unflinching search. They also let us feel, again and again, the actual existence of the "people of 1936," "people of 1938," and "people of the Thirties."

Probably this link connecting justice, the stand of self-sacrifice and the fiery bloody relationship is another main line in world history. It must be pointed out, though that the line which seems to be separated is in fact connected. Without the "people of 1936," there would be no "people of 1968."

The world's left-wing movement against the world's injustice in the sixties of the last century was their inheritors. Internationalism against repression and exploitation and for global justice and fairness is forever the indisputable truth. It will not lose its great value to the Enlightenment and its collective power in spite of the interference of Stalin or any other degenerated gangs. Without the present reality, moreover, people would not discern this truth.

Taking a broader view, don't you see daily tragedies, the

extermination of one country after another, the human lives plunged in a bloody bath, the intentional insult of faith and the camouflage by the media of mangled flesh and blood? --- what I want to say is, if you take down your blinding glasses and open up your closed heart and mind, and return to the normal status, you can see clearly that tragedies and despair are only caused by the ebb of justice in the world and the failure of internationalism.

The people of 1936, the people of 1968, as well as the sons and daughters of world justice march forward wave upon wave, with ebb and flow, never minding public opinion or failure. They shed blood for Spain the day before, but they never attempted to get a reward from Spain. They sacrificed for China's Anti-Japanese War yesterday, but they never noticed if the Chinese knew about it. Today they rush to Palestine dauntlessly to rescue people, no matter what the blind and deaf world would say.

They have been born and they will never retreat from history.

III. A Companion

It was owing to Bethune's girl-friend that the photo reappeared.

She was also an international fighter. It's said that Bethune came to China because he followed her advice. Bethune was eager to have her company in China, but it never happened.

Yet she too was "a female: person of the Thirties."

In the shower of bullets and dense smoke in the Taihang Mountains, Bethune bestowed on his beloved girl friend the photo of himself with Mao Zedong, a letter and a Japanese sabre captured by the Eighth Route Army. Not long after Bethune chose the fiery forefront instead of staying in Yen-an, he was wounded in the battle of Motian (Skyscraping) Peak in Laiyuan. He laid down his life in Huangshikou of Tang County after rescuing efforts failed.

Not a lot of people in Canada know about Bethune. It's said

that visitors to the Bethune Memorial Museum are mostly Chinese. However, the Chinese visitors paying respect to him with their youthful memory are not aware that Bethune's girl-friend actually lived in this country.

On that sparsely-populated vast land lived that lady, without uttering a word, forever keeping Bethune's tokens of love, till she turned old and white-haired and died a lonely death.

She did not even reveal this to her only son.

All her reticence, her track of life, her privacy and this photo of Bethune and Mao Zedong she kept as a companion seem soundless and formless, but they are much more than melodious and colorful, like a vividly portrayed statue of a revolutionary lover.

It is very hard to describe such a female. Everything between a man and a woman is known only to themselves. The ending between man and woman is seldom perfect. Nonetheless, only the opposite sex usually gives the other person decisive support.

Bethune had no regret in his life thanks to such a girl-friend. Mao Zedong was indispensable because he was their witness.

Her image induces my boundless imagination. The depth of their loving feelings is difficult for others to measure. The beauty is deeply hidden. The beauty is so profound that it is looking down at us.

Perhaps the religious portrayal is more appropriate? To Bethune, she is really "a pure companion in Heaven." (Note: from the Koran 2:25)

IV. Exchange

Bethune did not only come to China to fight from Spain's war front against fascism, but he also came to quiet "internal issues."

As early as in the winter of 1936 Bethune arrived at the Spanish front. After he left Spain, he did not choose to retreat to ease or comfort. When he returned to New York at the end

of 1937, without any break, he organized a medical team and directly rushed to the war front against Japan.

From the track of his actions we can sense a bit of his willingness to die. I guess “the original creed of communism,” similar with “the original creed of religion,” makes people not only disgusted, but also vexed. He encountered suspicion and slanders in Spain. With a heavy heart, he arrived at the poor and desolate Taihang Mountains, which had been greatly afflicted by the war.

What he brought from Spain was not only lofty sentiments. When he set foot on the yellow land in China, he proved once again that he was a fighter. At that moment he was eager to talk to his Chinese comrades-in-arms. He longed to pour out the indignation in his heart, to find some people to listen to his grievances and determination as well as his explanation. Doubtlessly he was filled with thinking and ideas regarding revolution and internationalism. Since meeting with the legendary Mao Zedong, he certainly wrote “many letters” to him.

Most regrettably, Bethune, the fighter, was set on rushing to the forefront and seldom stayed in Yen-an – so the two great men lost opportunities for profound exchanges.

The inner meaning of this loss is beyond our assessment. Apparently Mao Zedong was somewhat touched in his heart, so he mentioned the details: “Afterwards he wrote me many letters. But I was busy, and I wrote him only one letter and do not even know if he ever received it.” The sentence that Chairman Mao wrote in his article *In Memory of Norman Bethune* – “Comrade Bethune and I met only once” – is the only record of that exchange between the two.

Which performance were they watching when the photo was taken?

During their hard-won and only meeting, what did Bethune from the Spanish front and Mao Zedong in the cave dwelling of North Shanxi talk about?

There is no way to find out. However, perhaps some details might be imagined.

It was said that Bethune flew into a rage when “the party”

asked him to stay in the rear. He was said to declare in Yanan in the spring of 1938: "I did not come to enjoy life. I had coffee, beef and a spring-board bed a long time ago. I have given them up for my ideals. It is the wounded soldiers, not me, that need care!"

He was said to be so insensed that he threw a chair out of a cave dwelling, and made additional remarks, "I can apologize for my crudity, but you should also apologize to those wounded soldiers with crutches!"

Given these dramatic events, the talk between Mao Zedong and Bethune might have been ever richer and deeper. They might have discussed the reality of revolution and war, the front and the rear, life and struggle, revolutionary and ordinary people.

How on earth did they talk?

What was more important --- how did Mao Zedong in the cave in Yangjialin of Yanan, with only a break after the Xian Incident, receive this fighter from the first forefront of the world struggle? What position in his great knowledge system did the Spanish War and the International Column units from over 50 countries occupy? At that time and ever since then how did he look upon this world and how would he design his party -- would it be in an international image?

This is forever a regret and it is impossible to pursue.

I am only imagining that their talk was profound. The line of thinking in Mao Zedongs' mind perhaps laid down the future road for a country.

Bethune might not have been willing to talk freely about Spain, whether about the country they were willing to sacrifice themselves for or about himself. He swallowed a lot of worries on his mind, which reappeared after he left. He wanted to go to the risky war front to prove his dignity.

"He arrived in Yanan in the spring, went to work in the Wutai Mountains," Bethune never looked back when he spurred on his flying horse. The war flame of Wutai and Taihang was shining on his determination.

V. Bosom Friends

However, Mao Zedong obviously had a rare sense of perception.

A foreign fighter was determined to go to the desolate wilderness of the Taihang Mountains while refusing the subtle stability in Yen-an. A white man like him found it hard to express himself with a non-Chinese tongue. What on earth was hidden in his sudden appearance and from the fiery war front in Spain at that?

Mao Zedong's short article might have been written in a hurry. But you can discern that Mao Zedong was trying hard to savour something if you read his article carefully. He was attempting to catch an instantaneous feeling with his writing.

A long-cherished wish of youth, the bitter struggle in Europe and Asia, and his own ultimate target – everything was thrown into the simple surgery bed. Without the company of a girl-friend, no bosom friends to lend him an attentive ear – Who was he? What sort of a person was he? If such kind of people were converged in Spain, how should they be categorized?

With his agile inspiration, Mao Zedong kept Bethune at arm's length. Ever since the disappearance of Bethune, his friend for a brief period of time, he had never forgotten him. He seemed to be waiting as well.

The ending of a fighter was certain: Bethune passed away after countless battles, or rather, countless surgeries in the wild fields in the war front of Taihang, at the end of 1939 (November 12th).

Mao Zedong immediately wrote *In Memory of Norman Bethune* for his lost friend.

Probably Mao Zedong did not have a full understanding of the Spanish Civil War that Bethune was previously engaged in, or his behavior and ideas when he rushed to China without taking a break. Might the well-known memorial have been written even more splendidly? I dare not make a casual comment.

At present when I reread this article about eighty years after his sacrifice and fifty years after I memorized it, I really admire Mao Zedong's perception in his approach and his use of words.

Yes, the value of this short article will not be diminished thanks to its stress on "internationalism" in China.

How long is it since I enjoyed re-reading Bethune? I have never read anything that gave my heart such contentment. It is more profound especially after eighty years, with tragedies and separations occurring both at home and abroad.

The two were not close friends, but they were more than bosom friends. Like an appreciative friend in Chinese classics, Mao Zedong portrayed Bethune in his essence with just one stroke. This is what he wrote in his article *In Memory of Norman Bethune*:

What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism.

The article continues:

We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries, for this is the only way to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

It goes without saying that such a statement is a far cry from the countrymen who are crazily pursuing gain. Nonetheless, it also enlightens our judgment on today's world.

Yes, a fatal disease of today and a hazy tomorrow. What is our future?

Mao Zedong's enlightened view lies in a kind of "international union." It is not an international order of strong pow-

ers, neither regional allies seeking profits, nor is it a narrow religious alliance. It can perhaps direct today, but only if some words – such as the proletariat – are replaced by other words.

No matter how people are blinded by the eye-drops of the public opinion, a troop of young and enthusiastic people, a converging current from nearby sub-currents, are throwing themselves into places where new people are suffering, common grounds are destroyed and human hearts are longing for justice.

People have at last understood the urgent necessity of “internationalism.” This is especially true in the Islamic regions that were dragged by imperialism into hellish wars, the devilish fires ignited by never-ending screams and shouts have scorched all the false hue and cry of the original religious doctrine. The fabricated and arrogant preachers are rumbling and crumbling, while the “Muslims,” like a great new wave surging slowly and heavily are converging toward “internationalism.” Don’t say that it is only a hallucination. The gushing under the seas is mysterious. One day it will come whizzing, smashing everything on its way, and will rouse the deaf and enlighten the benighted all over the world.

Unite “with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries,” and join hands with all comrades, with different religions and faiths, overthrow imperialism with international union and liberate all nations and people – perhaps this is Mao Zedong’s world outlook and his bequeathed teaching.

Simultaneously, if we read this article from the point of view of “human” rights, it calls for the sublimation of humane qualities.

A man’s ability may be great or small, a man may have a different religion, or a man may live in a time of great historical changes, – “but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.”

Just as stated in the above-mentioned ideology, doubtlessly, today’s China is experiencing great splits. I can imagine foolish

ridicule when compared with the other countries' excitement towards the Spanish civil War. See, for example the essay collection of Iki Hiroyuki *The Spain in my Heart: the Spanish War and the Thirties*, Jing Wen Press, 1972. Nonetheless, an ideological tragedy would indicate even greater tragedies. People's ignorance is not only caused by their limited vision, but their ignorance is also caused by lack of education. But when people willfully and viciously vilify human ideals, then ideology can only choose reticence, calmly waiting for the judgment of history. Sooner or later, the wheel of history will come rumbling, destroying whatever is shared, be it homesickness or vanity!

It is better to return to talk about a smaller category.

In the final analysis, this article is only an exchange among enthusiastic people, an exchange between "the Thirties" and their inheritors "the Sixties."



I feel every word is fresh to me when I re-read Mao's article, to be more accurate, I started re-reading it after I finished writing my long article depicting Muslim pilgrimage as "the International Must Come True."

I was not yet twenty years old when I began memorizing "the three good articles" along with the whole society. At present I cherish the memory of Bethune, whether he was from Canada, Spain or the Taihang Mountains. I also cherish the memory of every internationalist who has faith in socialism, anarchism, Christianity, Buddhism or Allah. Occasionally I even cherish the memory of my own early youth when I read without understanding at all. Yes, without the foundation laid in that era, I might not show proper respect to the martyrs.

Yes, it requires fifty or even eighty years to fully understand a valuable article and a noble-minded person.

Translated into English by Baimei SUN in May 2017.

Translator's Note: Translation of quotations from *In Memory of Norman Bethune* in Chinese are taken from the English version of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*.

Remembering Norman Bethune

M. Darrol Bryant

I am honoured to be invited to be part of this auspicious event. I have been to China twice, in 2012 and 2013.¹ On both occasions, I was asked about Norman Bethune. I was surprised to encounter how deeply Bethune is remembered and revered in China. Here I want to share something of the story of Norman Bethune and to reflect on his legacy both in Canada and in China.

I begin with the following words:

Comrade Bethune's spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his boundless sense of responsibility in his work and his boundless warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people. Every Communist must learn from him.... We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people....²

What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn.... We must unite with the proletar-

¹ I was initially invited to make a public presentation of this paper. It was written for a ceremonial context. Although I did not make a public delivery, I have intentionally left it as it was written.

² *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse Tung* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967), pp. 171-172. The quotations cited here are from my copy of the little Red Book. I am aware of the many different versions available.

iat of all the capitalist countries...before it is possible to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism....³

There are not a few people who are irresponsible in their work, preferring the light to the heavy.... At every turn they think of themselves before others.... They swell with pride and brag about it.... They feel no warmth towards comrades and the people but are cold, indifferent and apathetic. In fact such people are not Communists....⁴

These, of course, are all words that come from my copy of Mao's "Red Book," as it is called in the West, a book I first read in the late 1960s. With these words, Norman Bethune was lifted from obscurity and elevated into the Chinese pantheon of immortals and into international recognition. Here, Bethune becomes the ideal Communist, the man for others, the exemplar of "boundless warm-heartedness" or, dare I say, *jen*. Of course, here Bethune is framed in the vocabulary of communism and its talk of "the people, the proletariat, imperialism, and comrades." However, there is something that echoes beneath these words in terms such as "spirit," "selflessness," "noble-minded," and "moral integrity." Aren't these terms that evoke the classical wisdom of the sages? What is the import and significance of these words of Mao concerning Norman Bethune?

Here, I want to revisit the life of Norman Bethune. From his humble beginnings in Gravenhurst, Ontario, Canada, through his education in Toronto to his service in World War I, his life in the United Kingdom, his bout with tuberculosis in the USA, his work as a thoracic surgeon in Montreal, his role in the Spanish Civil War and his life in China. However, before doing so, I want to situate the context in which I came to know something of Norman Bethune.

³ *Quotations*, op.cit., p. 177.

⁴ *Quotations*, op.cit., p. 241.

I.

I first encountered the name of Norman Bethune when I arrived in Canada to assume a teaching position at Waterloo Lutheran University, now Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, in 1967. University campuses in North America and across the world were alive with student protests against the war in Vietnam, the struggle for civil rights in the USA, and against social hypocrisy. It was a *kairotic* moment. I think I first heard the name from New Left students. Bethune, I was told, was a Canadian doctor who had fought fascism in the Spanish Civil War and had died in China. He challenged the status quo and was, as such, an iconic figure. It was a time when university students across the world challenged authority and lionized figures like Martin Luther King and Malcom X, wore Che Guevara t-shirts, shouted "Black Power," and occupied university campuses. This was the rebellious Sixties.

In the summer of 1968, I was at the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) in Washington, D.C., the last project initiated by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. He had been killed in April of that year. I'd been asked by the Lutheran Council USA to be present at the PPC and to interpret these events to Lutheran groups and churches in the Washington, DC, area. When I returned to the university for my second year of teaching, I was filled with passion for social justice and social change. My report on the Poor People's Campaign became a little volume entitled *To Whom It May Concern: Poverty, Humanity, Community*. It would lead to an invitation from the Lutheran World Federation located in Geneva, Switzerland, to organize a World Encounter of Lutheran Youth (WELY). This project was to focus on the issues of world hunger and student unrest. It would also involve a week in a rural setting and a week in an urban setting in Latin America exploring these issues. The young people would then be involved in the Fifth World Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

In preparation for the WELY I wrote another little volume entitled *A World Broken by Unshared Bread* that focused more on

world hunger than student unrest. While in Geneva, I became more aware of the Cultural Revolution unfolding in China. It was by young people. I again encountered the name of Norman Bethune. Now I encountered him as the heroic figure that Mao had portrayed.

Now I want to turn to Bethune's story...

II. "He was my bad boy..."

Norman Bethune was born in the parsonage of the Presbyterian Church in Gravenhurst, Ontario, on March 4, 1890. Canada would celebrate only its twenty-third national birthday later that year, though Europeans had come to these lands early in the 1600s. He was the first child of Rev. Malcolm Bethune and Elizabeth Goodwin, an English immigrant and evangelical missionary that Malcolm had met in Hawaii. The Scottish Bethunes had a long family history of clergymen, educators, and medical doctors. Norman's father was an acerbic figure and soon lost his position in Gravenhurst. The family moved around, serving parishes in Northern and Southern Ontario. Norman was a good student and early on collected insects and loved the outdoors. He would later have a brother, with whom he would not get along, and a sister, who was much closer. After Bethune finished school in Owen Sound, his mother said, "He was my bad boy. He was a pain in the neck when he was home and a pain in the heart when he was away."⁵

After teaching in an elementary school in Edgeley, Ontario, for six months, Bethune began his studies at the University of Toronto in 1909. He had difficulties meeting the language requirements in Latin and German. In 1911, he worked for Frontier College in a logging camp in Northern Ontario. He worked long, hard days, but loved the work. In the evenings, he taught English to the loggers, many of whom spoke no English. He also conducted some religious services on Sunday. Then he went back to school.

⁵ Roderick Stewart & Sharon Stewart, *Phoenix: The Life of Norman Bethune* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2011), p. 19.

III. Into the War and Wider World

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, Norman Bethune was one of the first to volunteer. He was assigned to a medical unit and became a stretcher-bearer at the front in France. In the battle at Ypres, Bethune was wounded while retrieving fallen soldiers under fire. He was rescued and sent to a hospital in England. When he recovered, he returned to his studies in medicine at Toronto and graduated in 1916.

He then joined the Royal Navy in 1917 as a Surgeon-Lieutenant at the Chatham Hospital and returned to England. The war ended, but he was involved with tending a ship full of soldiers who had come down with influenza. Bethune himself contracted influenza but recovered. In 1919, he received an internship in England specializing in children's diseases. He also made contact with relatives living in England, but he was regarded more as a "colonial" than as a member of the family.

In the early 1920s, Bethune went to Edinburgh to study for his Fellowship in the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS). It was here that he met Frances Perry. They were married in London in 1923. After a tour of Europe on Frances' inheritance, they returned to North America and settled in Detroit where Bethune opened a medical practice. It did not go well, and the Bethune's living style outran their income.

In 1926, Bethune discovered he had tuberculosis. He divorced Frances Perry and checked himself into the Trudeau Sanatorium in Saranac Lake, New York. Here he studied everything he could about his disease. He reached the conclusion that his best chance for recovery was a rare procedure that involved the collapse of a lung. He was able to persuade one of the doctors to do this procedure on him. It was remarkably successful. During his recovery, he wrote and illustrated the story of tuberculosis in the cabin he shared with other patients. He called it *The T.B.'s Progress: A Drama in one act and nine painful scenes*.⁶ It disclosed another side of Bethune: his artistic tem-

⁶ See Roderick Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2002), pp. 12-17. It includes images of *The T.B.'s Progress*. When the cabin was torn down,

perament. His bout with TB also determined the direction of the next phase of his life.

As he was preparing to leave Saranac he wrote, "Looking back, I can see how my fears and hopeless attitude in regard to the future were wrong. Fear is the great destroyer of happiness, and most fears are unjustified. It can be said that man lives by hope alone."⁷ This was a turning point in Bethune's life and outlook.

In 1928, he joined the thoracic surgical pioneer Dr. Edward William Archibald in Montreal where he remained until 1936.

In Montreal, Bethune perfected his skills in thoracic surgery and developed a number of new surgical tools, some of which are still in use. He also discovered politics and began to explore the interface of economics, medicine, and politics. He became known for his parties. Roderick Stewart writes that Bethune "opened his apartment to writers, artists, and poets for parties that became *the talk of Montreal*."⁸ His apartment was filled with paintings, some his own, mostly by others. He was writing poetry. One poem began: "Look, see us stand, with eager upturned faces/Lit by the rising sun of our new love/whose gentle light touches so tenderly/eyelids and mouth/O, my sweet, I am afraid."⁹

In 1929, he and Frances Perry remarried. The marriage lasted three years until 1932.

In 1933, he was invited to become the head of the new Department of Thoracic Surgery at Sacre Coeur Hospital north of Montreal. He became active in international medical conferences. Yet he was not content. He continued to pursue the interface between tuberculosis and the social environment in which people lived, especially the poor. He was impatient with the medical community. It was too caught up in its own pro-

The T.B.'s Progress was transferred to the University Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 1935 he would write *The Compressionist's Creed* as a Christmas card. It began "I believe in the Trudeau Sanitarium..." and included the phrase "in the resurrection of a healthy body from a diseased one..." (p. 17).

⁷ See Roderick Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune*, op. cit., p. 16. This volume includes material that Bethune wrote over the years.

⁸ Stewart, *op.cit.*, p. 39. Italics added.

⁹ Stewart, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

fessional status, resistant to change, unwilling to entertain new ways of thinking about the relationship between health and social conditions – why were the poor more often ill? – and the social injustices in the way we deliver health care. He was on his way to a political conversion.

In the spring of 1935, Bethune went to the Soviet Union to attend the International Physiological Congress. He returned impressed by their medical system: it treated all who were ill and not just the rich.¹⁰ He initiated the Montreal Group for the Security of the People's Health (MGSPH) to look at health systems in various countries. Bethune would report on systems in Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Later that year MGSPH reported some of its findings to a medical meeting, but Bethune, the last speaker, issued a blistering attack on the medical profession. It was entitled "Malice in Blunderland," a play on Alice in Wonderland.¹¹ Then in December, at a meeting in Tennessee, he called for "socialized medicine in the USA." During this period, Bethune was erratic in his behavior and drinking heavily. He had been approached about becoming a member of the Communist Party in Canada. He resisted the invitation, but he was sympathetic to the cause. He wrote,

...Creation is not and has never been a genteel gesture. It is rude, violent, and revolutionary.... Russia presents today the most exciting spectacle of the evolutionary, emergent, and heroic spirit of man, which has appeared on the earth since the Reformation.¹²

¹⁰ See Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix*, op. cit. "Bethune had told Frances long before that a doctor should ideally offer his services freely to all, and, like a medieval monk, should be fed, clothed, and housed through acts of charity." p. 171.

¹¹ In the midst of these events, Bethune also offered some more reasoned arguments when he said that "socialized medicine means that health protection becomes public property like the post office...the judiciary...the school. Charity must be abolished and justice substituted." See Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune*, p. 52.

¹² Stewart, op.cit. p. 46. In the *Phoenix*, op. cit., Roderick Stewart wrote that "...he [Bethune] was torn over how deeply he was attracted to communism. He had no doubts about the philosophical basis of Marxism. Many of its values were identical to those taught to him by his parents. Like evangelical Christians, Communists were committed to uprooting the evil and corrupt base of society in order to build a world in which poverty and suffering would disappear and equality would replace privilege.... My father was a Presbyterian minister who joined the...evangelical movement. Their slogan was "the world for Christ

During an election in Quebec in 1936, the MGSPH put forth a series of proposals for the reform of health care in Quebec. They were virtually ignored. This was the final straw for Bethune. He joined the Communist Party in Canada and sought to go to Spain to join the Republican forces fighting the fascists under Franco. He kept his association with the Communist Party under wraps and went to Spain as a humanitarian. He purchased a vehicle and created one of the first mobile blood transfusion units.

His experience in Spain confirmed the direction of his life: to offer his medical and surgical skills to the fight against fascism. This was, he saw, an international battle.

IV. China: the Last Chapter

Bethune's declared commitment to the Communist way closed the door for a return to Spain and to the Catholic hospital in Montreal. He had read about China and let Tim Buck, the leader of the Canadian Communist Party, know of his desire to go to China. The Canadian and American parties raised money for Bethune's medical mission to China. On January 8, 1938, he set sail from Vancouver. It would be his last voyage.

Bethune arrived in Xian, China, on March 22, 1938. Here he met Zhu De, the head of the 8th Route Army. China was then engaged in the struggle against the Japanese. He continued on to Yan'am where on March 31, 1938, he met Mao Zedong, the Communist Party leader and President of the Revolutionary Military Council. Bethune came away from their meeting deeply impressed. He was immediately put to work. In June 1938, he arrived at Jingangku/Songyankou, a village in the Wutai Shan Mountains where he opened a hospital. He threw himself into the work like a man possessed. He began to treat soldiers wounded in the war and villagers suffering from various maladies. Conditions were difficult, medical supplies, food, and sleep always in short supply, and the need for

in our generation" and this is my slogan "the world for Marx...." This was "his deepest impulse," p. 123.

medical care overwhelming.¹³ Yet much of his correspondence ended with the statement, “we are happy and content in our work.”¹⁴ He had arrived at his destiny.

The value of Bethune’s contributions was obvious to everyone, especially General Nieh Rongzhen. Bethune was continually given more and more responsibilities. In July 1938, he sent Mao Zedong a report that listed patients and the nature of their wounds. He also outlined the fourteen improvements he had made – ranging from an “operating room constructed and enlarged,” “clean-up squads to enforce disposal of refuse, food and soiled dressing,” “fly control,” “a sterilizer,” “duties of nurses...printed & posted,” “one hundred leg and arm splints made” – and seven more improvements underway.¹⁵ In an address to a Party Congress in China, Bethune asserted:

Your war is just and you are not alone. Our Canada-US medical team is proof that the people of the world support you. Opposition to fascism and imperialism is our common burden. I came to China not just for your sake, but for ours as well, we will fight shoulder-to-shoulder with our Chinese comrades until the war of resistance is victorious.¹⁶

Bethune was appalled by the conditions of the villages he encountered and the absence of medical care. Yet he loved the Chinese people and their struggle, especially the villagers whose life he shared. In January 1939, he began training Chinese doctors and nurses in addition to his full-time work of treating military and civilian injuries and diseases. The scale of his work is mind-boggling. One source reported that in one 69-hour period in April 1939, Bethune and his staff performed 115 operations. Here is Bethune’s report on his work:

¹³ See the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and the entry on Norman Bethune for some of the information found in this paragraph. www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bethune_heny_norman_16E.html accessed July 17, 2015.

¹⁴ For Bethune’s own account of his journey and work in China see Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune*, *op.cit.*, pp. 98-211. For a detailed interpretation of Bethune’s time in China see Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix*, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-368.

¹⁵ See Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune*, *op.cit.*, pp. 140-142.

¹⁶ Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, p. 344.

The work that I am trying to do is to take peasant boys and young workers and make doctors out of them. They can read, write and most have a knowledge of arithmetic. None of my doctors have ever been to college or university.... With this material, I must make doctors and nurses out of them, in 6 months for nurses and 1 year for doctors. We have 2300 in hospitals all the time. These hospitals are merely the dirty one-story mud and stones houses of out-of-the-way villages set in deep valleys overhung by mountains.... We have over 20 of these hospitals.... We are the most active Partisan area in China and engaged in very severe guerrilla warfare all the time."¹⁷

The work was taking its toll. Bethune had lost weight and his hearing in one ear was impaired; he began to make plans for a leave.

It was not to be. On October 28, 1939, "he cut the middle finger of his left hand during an operation" and on November 1, "he contracted septicemia." He had begun a letter to General Nie Rongzhen saying, "I am fatally ill. I am going to die...."¹⁸ The letter was never sent. He died on November 12, 1939. He was buried in China.

V. *"I am Content, I am Doing what I want to Do"*

Bethune's death was virtually unnoticed in Canada, but not so in China. Hearing of an approaching Japanese army, the villagers and Bethune's translator disguised Bethune's body as a wounded soldier and took him along icy trails to the village of Yujaizahai. On November 17, a ceremony attended by local officials and most of the villagers was held. Then his remains were buried in a field. When news of his death reached members of the Central Committee and General Zhu De, a four-hour mass meeting was held to mourn his passing. On December 21,

¹⁷ Stewart, *The Mind of Norman Bethune*, *op.cit.*, p. 208.

¹⁸ Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix*, *op.cit.*, p. 367.

1939, Mao Zedong composed a eulogy entitled "In Memory of Norman Bethune."¹⁹ Roderick Stewart reports what happened next:

In early January the Chinese transported Bethune's body to the village of Juncheng where an improvised pavilion had been constructed. They placed the body on a funeral bier, lying beside some of his instruments and a few of his personal effects. On the wall behind they hung a large photograph of him, flanked by commemorative tributes sent from various sectors of the Jin-Cha-Ji Border Region, and draped a Chinese flag above. Wreaths were banked before the bier, and near it on a pedestal burned a circle of candles representing the completeness and light of his life. By 5 January more than ten thousand mourners had shuffled, weeping, past Bethune's frail corpse. ...Nie Rongzhen and several of Bethune's comrades paid tribute to him... and it was announced that the medical school set up by him two months before his death would be named after him.... Performers staged a play to demonstrate Bethune's service to the people of China. The villagers of Jun Cheng built a tomb for Bethune....²⁰

The tomb was dedicated in June 1940. The transfiguration of Bethune into a hero had begun and it arose from the villagers who had been touched by him. The tomb and mourning of the people is the evidence that Bethune was to be remembered as more than a Canadian doctor who had come to their aid during the war with the Japanese, more than simply a fallen comrade. Mao sought to make him the ideal communist, and the people of China made him into something more. What are we to make of this? Was this the transformation or transfiguration or deification or, to use a Chinese term, the *bianhua* of Bethune?²¹

¹⁹ See Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix, op.cit.*, pp. 369 ff.

²⁰ Stewart & Stewart, *Phoenix, op.cit.*, p. 369.

²¹ Much more needs to be done on this issue. I am not sure if this is the right term for what happened with Bethune in the minds of Chinese. But it is clear to me that something quite profound occurred and it seems to resonate with popular Chinese spirituality. If you can

It would be thirty years before Canada would begin to acknowledge their native son. Meanwhile, the Japanese were finally defeated and expelled from China. On October 1, 1949, the Red Army marched into Beijing. They claimed the Mandate of Heaven and established the People's Republic of China.²² Immediately, Bethune's tomb was transferred to Shijiazhuang, and in 1952, it was placed near a large statue of him in the Martyrs Cemetery.²³ Work had also begun on the Bethune Medical School and the Norman Bethune International Peace Hospital. Survivors from the 1930s Model Hospital, destroyed by the Japanese, saw it rebuilt in the early 1970s. Mao's eulogy "In Memory of Norman Bethune" was required reading in elementary schools in the 1960s. During the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, Bethune was presented as the model of the dedicated communist. However, he had become something more than that among the people of China.

In Canada, recognition of Bethune came slowly. It was not until 1970 that Canada, under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, officially recognized the People's Republic of China.²⁴ In 1972, Trudeau made a state visit to China and upon his return; Bethune was recognized as "a Canadian of national historic significance." The Canadian government purchased the manse where Bethune was born, and it opened in 1976 as a national museum. New books and articles on Bethune were written in the 1970s, and later there were poems, plays, made-for-TV films, documentaries, and big-budget films. In 1979 – the fortieth anniversary of his death – commemorative events for Bethune were held in China and Canada.

venerate the ancestors, then why not one who gave his life for the Chinese?

²² India was the first country to recognize the People's Republic of China. Many Western nations did not recognize the PRC until after they took a seat at the UN in 1971, most noteworthy the USA.

²³ Note the language, "Martyrs Cemetery." In English, a martyr is one who refuses to renounce his or her faith and is put to death. It comes from the experience of early Christians.

²⁴ Trudeau had traveled in China in the 1940s and John English's two volume biography of Trudeau (*Citizen of the World: The Life of Pierre Elliot Trudeau* and *Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliot Trudeau*) reports that Trudeau found Chou Enlai one of the most remarkable figures he knew. There were other Canadians that influenced the decision of the Canadian government to recognize the PRC. They included former missionaries to China and figures like, I recently discovered, the Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning (1894-1984).

In 2002, Canada's Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, unveiled a bronze statue of Norman Bethune on the main street of Gravenhurst, Ontario. In 2004, the CBC, the national broadcaster, presented a list of the "50 Greatest Canadians," with Bethune twenty-sixth on the list. In 2007, Dennis Bock's novel, *The Communist's Daughter*, appeared. It is an excellent fictional account of Bethune in Spain and China.

Only recently, I learned that many Chinese pray to Bethune when they visit his tomb and his memorials. This is a phenomenon that Mao had not anticipated or desired. It reflects something of the wisdom of traditional Chinese spirituality that sees the sacred in the secular, as well as the popular Chinese veneration of ancestors.²⁵ Bethune has been elevated to the Chinese pantheon of ancestors, sages, and immortals that may be called upon for assistance today.

It was in China that Bethune wrote: "I am Content, I am Doing what I want to Do." In China, his life achieved its fulfillment, and the villagers and soldiers he doctored responded with devotion and thanks. The heroic story of Bethune, the one that grew especially out of his remarkable two years of dedicated doctoring in China in 1938-39, continues to shine in

²⁵ It is noteworthy that Mao used words and phrases like "spirit, devotion to others, warm-heartedness, absolute selflessness, noble minded and moral integrity" in his eulogy for Bethune. This is not the language of Communism but it is language that comes out of, and resonates in, the great traditions of spirituality, both East and West. And it is in such words that we hear the echoes of the three Sages of China – Confucius, Lao Tzu, & Buddha – as well as popular Chinese religion. While we cannot pursue this here, I want nonetheless to indicate an underlying dimension of the story of Bethune in China that needs to be pursued.

the lives of many, especially in the East where he achieved his transfiguration or *bianhua*.²⁶

²⁶ Roderick Steward wrote, "Joining the Communist Party provided Bethune with a core belief that he may have hungered for unconsciously. He had long since rejected formal Christianity, but many of the precepts of the faith of his parents were bred in his bones: his deep sense of personal predestination, the concept of the struggle of good against evil, and the moral obligation to serve the poor and helpless. Now he had found a "modern religion", as he called it, that answered all his needs...he felt honour-bound to embrace his new faith wholly, whatever the cost." *Phoenix, op.cit.*, p. 127. This raises the issue of the relationship between Christianity and Communism in Bethune's life. There are many contemporary scholars who see Marxism as an "implicit religion." It interests me that Mao uses the phrase "a man for others" in his eulogy for Bethune, a phrase that has often been used in relation to Jesus. I also suggested above that the term "warm heartedness" echos the notion of *jen* or human heartedness in the Confucian tradition. When I asked Yan Li if Chinese people venerate Norman Bethune, she said that they did. It is a common practice in the Chinese tradition to venerate the ancestors. The word Yan Li used is *chong bai*. This can be translated as "worship," but has to be understood in a Chinese way. However, we cannot pursue these threads here.

Contributors

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Margaret Loewen Reimer is a writer and editor in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. She is a graduate of the University of Waterloo (MA) and the University of Toronto (PhD in English Literature). She has been an editor with a national Mennonite periodical, and has published in the areas of literature as well as religion and the arts. Her books include *One Quilt, Many Pieces: A Guide to Mennonite Groups in Canada* (Herald Press, 2008), *Mennonites and the Artistic Imagination* (Lecture series at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, 1998) and *Approaching the Divine: Signs and Symbols of the Christian Faith* (Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2017).

Larry Hannant is a history professor and an award-winning author and website creator. He is an adjunct associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Victoria and a former instructor at Camosun College in Victoria. He is

the author of *The Infernal Machine: Investigating the Loyalty of Canada's Citizens* (1995) and the editor of *The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune's Writing and Art* (1998), which won the Robert S. Kenny Prize in Left/Labour Studies in 1999, and *Champagne and Meatballs: Adventures of a Canadian Communist* (2011). Han-nant researched and co-wrote a feature-length documentary film on the Doukhobor's, *The Spirit Wrestlers*. He was also the director of "Explosion on the Kettle Valley Line: The Death of Peter Verigin" and "Death of a Diplomat: Herbert Norman and the Cold War. In addition to non-fiction books, he has published magazine and newspaper articles, as well as poetry and short stories.

David Lethbridge is a retired professor of psychology, with an MA from Concordia University in Montreal and a PhD from the University of Regina. His major interests are in psycho-analysis and psychobiography. He has written *Norman Bethune in Spain: Commitment, Crisis, and Conspiracy*; *Bethune: The Secret Police File*; *Mind in the World*; and "The Blood Fights on in Other Veins: Norman Bethune and the Transfusion of Cadaver Blood in the Spanish Civil War," for the *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*. He spoke at the "Many Norman Bethunes" symposium in Montreal in 2009. He has published many scholarly and scientific articles on other subjects.

Yan Li is the Director of the Confucius Institute (CI) at Renison University College in Waterloo, Ontario. Born in China, Yan Li was educated there and worked as a teacher, translator, and free-lance journalist before immigrating to Canada. She completed further studies in Canada and became the CI Director in 2008. While in China, she published her first novel, *The Living White House* (1988), and when she came to Canada, she published her first novel in English: *Daughters of the Red Land* (1995). It has been widely praised. Later publications include *Lily in the Snow* that recounts the struggle of a young woman to find acceptance in a new culture.

Marc St-Pierre is a graduate student at Laval University. He recently completed his M.A. in History.

Judith Maclean Miller taught Canadian literature at Renison University College and retired as Professor Emerita. A popular teacher and *doyen* of local culture, she then founded *Stonegarden Studios*. *Stonegarden* publishes beautiful chapbooks linking visual art with a text, for example, *This Soil, This Water*. Her publications include *Reading/Writing Canada: Short Fiction and Non-Fiction*, and literary criticism like “*Deconstructing Silence: the Mystery of Alice Munro*.” She is also a writer of poetry.

Dennis Bock is a Canadian novelist and short story writer. His masterful novel on Norman Bethune, *The Communist's Daughter* (2006) was published in Canada and the US. It has also been published in France, the Netherlands, Poland and Greece. Earlier he had published the *Ash Garden* on “fallout from the Hiroshima bomb.” It too was later published internationally. Bock also teaches at Humber College and the University of Toronto.

Chengzhi Zhang is from the Hui ethnic group (Chinese Muslim) and at one time worked in archeology as an historical researcher. Currently a freelance writer, he writes and publishes works in Mongolian and Japanese languages as well as in Chinese. His early works, *Black Steed* and *Northern River*, incorporate themes of a young intellectual dealing with life on the grasslands that absorb nutrients from the earth and give local life its strength and spiritual nourishment. In his later works, for example, *Inner Spirit*, Zhang combines his personal ideals with his religious beliefs to undertake a spiritual search for the survival of the Hui people and their faith. In contemporary Chinese literature, Zhang is especially noted for his strong idealism.

Libbie Park (1900-1986) was born in Quebec and recently graduated from the Montreal General Hospital School of Nursing

when she met Norman Bethune in the 1930s. She was a charter member of the Bethune Health Group and wrote her contribution on *The Bethune Health Group* in 1982. She was also one of three authors of *Bethune: the Montreal Years*. During World War II she went overseas to serve as a public health nurse. A granddaughter remarked that when anyone identified her as a communist, she would always respond by saying, she “was a Marxist, not a communist.”