

Dr. Norman Bethune

Private profit had to be removed from medicine, he wrote. "All health is public, socialized medicine and the abolition or restriction of private practice would seem to be the realistic solution.... There is a rich man's tuberculosis and a poor man's - the rich man recovers and the poor man dies."

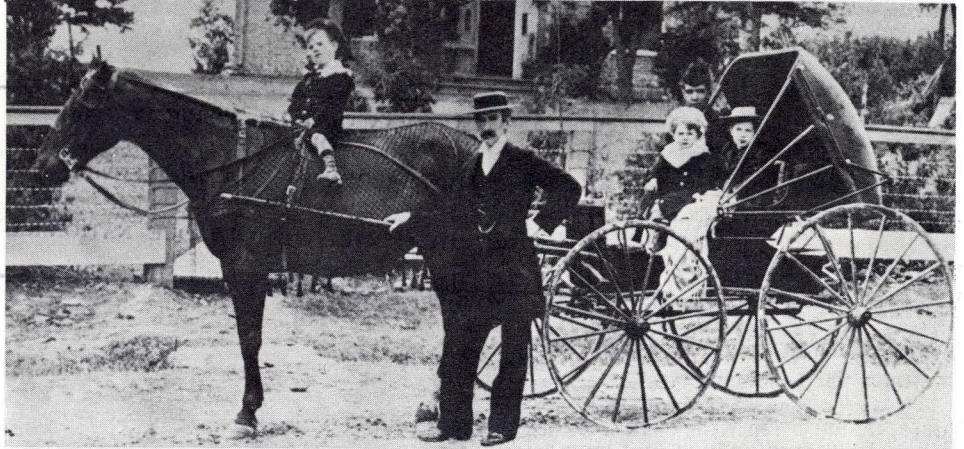
Also in 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, Bethune went to Spain. He set up a mobile blood-transfusion service which began operating within one month. Soldiers were treated where they fell. Back in Canada in 1937, he went

Tribute from China

Excerpts from a speech by Chang Chih-chiang, Vice-Minister for Public Health of the People's Republic of China, at Gravenhurst, Ontario, on August 30.

...Doctor Bethune was a fine son of the Canadian people and a close friend of the Chinese people. To help the Chinese people in their war of resistance against Japan, he left his motherland 38 years ago and made light of travelling thousands of miles to join them in their battle. Sharing weal and woe and fighting shoulder to shoulder with them, he worked selflessly and diligently against the war of aggression and for the creation of a New China until he laid down his life....

...He wrote an immortal and glorious page in the annals of friendship between the Chinese and Canadian peoples. He will live forever in the hearts of the Chinese people and will always be an example for them to emulate...."



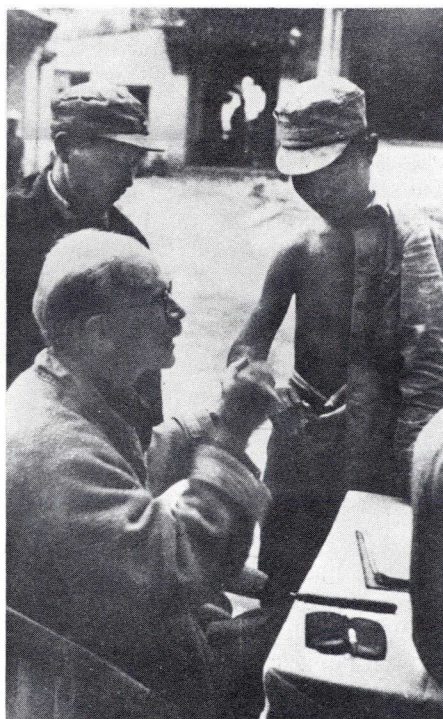
Earliest known picture of the Bethune family taken about 1893-94. Norman is on the horse; also present the Rev.

Malcolm Nicolson Bethune (1857-1932) and Elizabeth Ann Goodwin, his wife, (1852-1948).

on a cross-country speaking tour to raise funds.

On to China

It was at this time that another war broke out - one that changed the doctor's life. The Japanese invaded China and, in January 1938, sponsored by the China Aid Council, Bethune went to the provisional capital of Hankow to await passage to Yenan, the Communist headquarters. Chairman Mao Tse-tung, who was in Yenan, met him and asked him to supervise the Eighth Route Army Base Hospital. Bethune refused - he wanted to go



Bethune ministers to a Chinese boy, probably in spring or summer of 1939.

right to the front lines.

He was appalled at primitive medical conditions there. On inspection tours of the whole area he stopped to operate wherever he went. He designed and had built a permanent teaching and operating hospital only to witness its destruction in three weeks by enemy action. He took to the field again and, in an area of 13 million people, was the only qualified doctor. He wrote that he had carried out 110 operations in 25 days. Once, in the space of 69 hours he performed 115 operations without stopping, even under heavy fire. He travelled more than 3,000 miles, 400 on foot. He streamlined operating equipment so that he could carry enough supplies on two mules for 500 operations. He taught people to be doctors in a year, nurses in six months. He organized classes, wrote and illustrated instruction manuals, and adapted surgical instruments to conditions in China.

From hero to legend

Dr. Bethune touched many, and his name, rendered into Chinese as Pai Ch'iu-en, became legendary.

"It is true that I am tired," he wrote to a friend in Canada, "but I don't think I have been so happy for a long time.... I am needed."

On November 11, 1939, he wrote: "I am fatally ill, I am going to die. My only regret is that I shall be unable to do more..."

Bethune, healer of thousands, had cut himself while operating on a wounded soldier and infection set in. He died from a virulent form of blood poisoning.

When Chairman Mao heard of his death