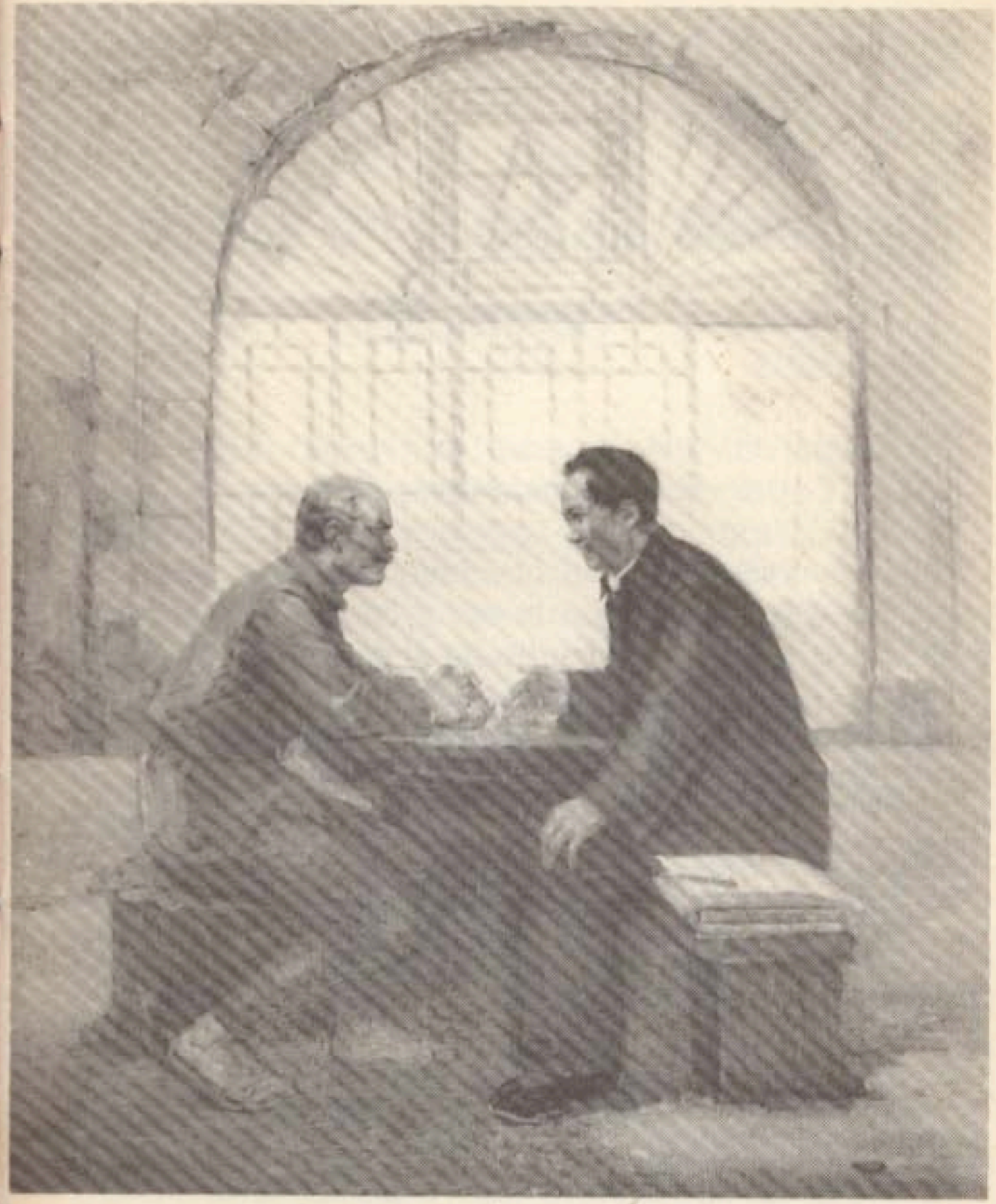
Little Books of Hope

BETHUNE

The Wounds

Little Books of Hope



BETHUNE: The Wounds

Little Books of Hope
Alive Press Limited
6 Meyer Drive, Guelph, Ontario
Managing Editor: M.M. Pickersgill

We acknowledge the assistance of Progress Books, Toronto, in compiling this collection—and the assistance of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) for the loan of the photographs included herein.

For information on other books in the series: Little Books of Hope, and for information on bulk purchases, contact the Managing Editor.

Speech On Socialized Medicine (Montreal)

Tonight there has been shown the most interesting case ever presented to the Society. It is the case of "the People versus the Doctors". We are acting both as defendant and Judge. It behooves us to apply our minds with the utmost objectivity to this question. This case is an ethical and moral problem in the field of social and political economics, and not medical economics alone. Medicine must be envisaged as embedded in the social fabric and inseparable from it. It is the product of any given social environment. The basis of any social structure is economic. The economic theory and practice in this country is termed capitalistic. It is founded on individualism, competition and private profit. This capitalistic system is undergoing an economic crisis — commonly called the depression. This is not a temporary illness of the body politic, but a deadly disease requiring systematic treatment. Systematic treatment is called, by the timid, radical remedies. Those palliative measures as suggested by most of our political quacks are aspirin tablets for a syphilitic headache. They may relieve, they will never cure.

Medicine is a typical, loosely organized, basically individualistic industry in this 'catch as catch can' capitalistic system, operating as a monopoly on a private profit basis. Now, it is inevitable that medicine should undergo much the same crisis as the rest of the capitalistic world and should present much the same interesting and uncomfortable phenomena. This may be epitomized as "poverty of health in the midst of scientific abundance of knowledge of disease". Just as thousands of people are hungry in a country which produces more food than the people can consume (we even burn coffee, kill hogs and pay farmers not to plant wheat and cotton), just as thousands are wretchedly clothed though the manufacturers can make more clothing than they can sell, so millions are sick, hundreds of thousands suffer pain, and tens of thousands die prematurely through lack of adequate medical care, which is available but for which they cannot pay. The problem of medical economics is a part of the problem of world economics and is inseparable and indivisible from it. Medicine, as we are practising it, is a luxury trade. We are selling bread at the price of jewels....

Where do we go from here

Permit a few categorical statements. Dogmatism has a role in the realm of vacillation.

1) The best form of providing health protection would be to change the economic system which produces ill-health, and liquidate ignorance, poverty and unemployment. The practice of each individual chasing his own medical care does not work. It is unjust, inefficient, wasteful and completely outmoded. Doctors, private charity and philanthropic institutions have kept it alive as long as possible. It

should have died a natural death a hundred years ago, with the coming of the industrial revolution in the opening years of the 19th century. In our highly-geared, modern industrial society there is no such thing as private health — all health is public. The illness and maladjustments of one unit of the mass affects all other members. The protection of the people's health should be recognized by the Government as its primary obligation and duty to its citizens. Socialized medicine and the abolition or restriction of private practice would appear to be the realistic solution of the problem. Let us take the profit, the private economic profit, out of medicine, and purify our profession of rapacious individuals. Let us make it disgraceful to enrich ourselves at the expense of the miseries of our fellow man. Let us organize ourselves so that we can no longer be exploited as we are being exploited by our politicians. Let us re-define medical ethics — not as a code of professional etiquette between doctors, but as a code of fundamental morality and justice between medine and the people. In our medical society let us discuss more often the great problems of our age and not so much interesting cases; the relationship of medicine to the State; the duties of the profession to the people; the matrix of economics and sociology in which we exist. Let us recognize that our most important contemporaneous problems are economic and social and not technical and scientific in the narrow sense that we employ those words.

2) Medicine, like any other organization today, whether it be the Church or the Bar, is judging its leaders by their attitude to the fundamental social and economic issues of the day. We need fewer leading physicians and famous surgeons in modern medicine and more far-sighted, socially-imaginative statesmen.

The medical profession must do this — as the traditional, historical and altruistic guardians of the people's health: let us present to the Government a complete, comprehensive program of a planned medical service for all the people, then, in whatever position the profession finds itself after such a plan has been evolved, that position it must accept. This apparent immolation as a burnt offering on the altar of ideal public health will result in the profession rising like a glorious Phoenix from the dead ashes of its former self.

Medicine will be entirely re-organized and unified, welded into a great army of doctors, dentists, nurses, technicians and social service workers, to make a collectivized attack on diseases and utilizing all the present scientific knowledge of its members to that end.

Let us say to the people not — "how much have you got?", but — "how best can we serve you?" Our slogan should be "we are in the business for your health".

3) Socialized medicine means that health-protection becomes 1st, public property, like the post office, the army, the navy, the judiciary and the school; 2nd, supported by public funds; 3rd, with services available to all, not according to income but according to need. Charity must be abolished and justice substituted. Charity debases the donor and debauches the recipient. 4th, its workers to be paid by the State with assured salaries and pensions; 5th, with democratic self-government by the Health workers themselves.

Twenty-five years ago it was thought contemptible to be called a Socialist. Today it is ridiculous not to be one.

Medical reforms, such as limited Health Insurance schemes, are not socialized medicine. They

are bastard forms of Socialism produced by a belated humanitarianism out of necessity.

The three major objections which the opponents of socialized medicine emphasize are: 1st, loss of initiative. Although the human donkey probably needs, in this state of modern barbarism, some sort of vegetable dangled in front of his nose, these need not be golden carrots but a posy of prestige will do as well. 2nd, Bureaucracy. This can be checked by democratic control of organization from bottom to top. 3rd, the importance of the patient's own selection of a doctor. This is a myth; its only proponents are the doctors themselves — not the patients. Give a limited choice — say of 2 or 3 doctors, then if a patient is not satisfied, send him to a psychiatrist. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander — the doctor must also be given his own selection of patients. 99 per cent of patients want results not personalities.

4) Our profession must arouse itself from its scientific and intensely personal preoccupation and, becoming socially-minded, realize the inseparability of health from economic security.

Let us abandon our isolation and grasp the realities of the present economic crisis. The world is changing beneath our very eyes and already the bark of Aesculapius is beginning to feel beneath its keel the great surge and movement of the rising world tide which is sweeping on, obliterating old landscapes and old beaches. We must go with the tide or be wrecked.

5) The contest in the world today is between two kinds of men: those who believe in the old jungle individualism, and those who believe in cooperative efforts for the securing of a better life for all.

The people are ready for socialized medicine.

The obstructionists to the people's health-security lie within the profession itself. Recognize this fact. It is the all-important fact of the situation. These men with the mocking face of the reactionary or the listlessness of the futilitarian, proclaim their principles under the guise of "maintenance of the sacred relationship between doctor and patient", "inefficiency of other non-profit nationalized enterprises", "the danger of Socialism,,, "the freedom of individualism". These are the enemies of the people and make to mistake: They are the enemies of medicine too.

The situation which is confronting Medicine today is a contest of two forces in Medicine itself. One holds that the important thing is the maintenance of our vested historical interest, our private property, our monopoly of health distribution. The other contends that the function of Medicine is greater than the maintenance of the doctor's position, that the security of the people's health is our primary duty, and that our human rights are above professional privileges. So the old challenge of Shakespeare's character in Henry IV still rings out across the centuries: **"Under which King, Bezonian, stand or die".**

The Road From Malaga

....We spent one hour in Almeria: long enough to look for a meal that was unobtainable. The little seaport had been bombed from the air and blockaded from the sea. One could sense the hunger in the streets. A street urchin led us to a little bar, but it was completely filled with militiamen,all of them eating the same steaming, soupy mixture. Ragged youngsters roved among the tables, pouncing on the leavings. At a hotel in the centre of town the proprietor apologetically served the one-course, standard fare: beans. When we started out again the streets were filling with people. The news about Malaga was spreading.

....Men stood about in groups, debating: was it wise to stay? Was it possible the fascists could come this far?

....Sise drove by the port and into the hills. From here to Malaga there was only one road. From Almeria it followed the jagged line of the coast. It circled round steep curves, banked on the right by

gray cliffs, overlooking the sea on the left. Behind us Almeria was cut off from view; below us the Mediterranean tossed its breakers against the rocks.

....Ten miles out of Almeria my reveries were interrupted by a strange procession. I peered through the windshield wonderingly. Peasants? Yes, plodding along with the ever present donkey. Yet as they drew closer they were no longer merely peasants.

....Coming towards us we saw a man leading a donkey by a string, dragging his feet, his head hanging, a child tied onto its back with a shawl. The donkey was heaped high with a mattress, pots and pans, a pair of boots, blankets, a water jug. A boy hung onto the donkey's tail. Behind him came a woman with an infant in her arms, and behind her an old man hobbling with a stick, dragging another child by the hand.

....The refugees passed the car without seeming to notice it. They plodded along wearily, their feet scuffing the hard road,, their shoulders drooping as if to pull them forward, their mouths hanging open, their eyes rolling upwards in the unconscious symptom of complete exhaustion.

....Further down the road another group was filing round the bend. They were like mourners following a hearse. The men staggered under their wide hats, the women trailed haltingly in their traditional dark cotton cloaks, the children wore only short pants or shifts, their half-naked bodies hot in the sun.

....The second group stumbled by us and I felt a jab of pity, anger, impatience. We drove on, and around every bend there were more refugees. At first they came on in scattered groups, then at more frequent intervals — a hundred yards apart, fifty yards, then following on each others' heels: a thin line flowing without break along the side of the road, with the hot sun above and the sea below.

....They were families walking together, carrying a

few trivial possessions; men and women who seemed to be alone, moving without choice at the pace set by the others; children with tired, bewildered faces, passing from hand to hand.They seemed to have sprung from the ground; they were like shadows moving from nowhere to nowhere. Between the noise of the sea and the echoing cliffs the only sound they made was the scuffing of sandals on stone, the hiss of laboured breathing, the moaning that burst from cracked lips and travelled along the wavering line till it expired in the distance.

....They were of all ages, but their faces were drawn with the same weariness. They flowed past our truck without expression: a young girl, hardly sixteen, straddling a donkey, her head drooping over an infant at her breast; a grandmother, her old face half-hidden in her dark shawl, dragging along between two men; a patriarch, shrivelled down to skin and bone, his bare feet dripping blood on the road; a young man with a pile of bedding strapped to his shoulders, the leather thongs cutting into his flesh with every step; a woman holding her stomach, her eyes wide and fearful — a silent, haggard, tortured flood of men and animals, the animals bellowing in complaint like humans, the humans as uncomplaining as animals.

....Sise stopped the car. I got out and stood in the center of the road. Where were they from? Where were they going? What had happened? They looked at me slowly, sideways. They had no strength to go on, but feared to linger. The fascists were behind them they said. Malaga? Yes, they were from Malaga, and Malaga had fallen. Malaga! Nadamas! Where were they going? Wherever the road led. There was no other road. The fascists had come to Malaga, the guns had roared, the houses had crumbled, the city had been gored and everyone able to walk had taken to the roads. Turn about, they

advised: there was nothing left....nothing behind them but more people on the road, and behind them again, the fascists.

....I came back to the truck. Hazen had his camera ready. I watched grimly while he took pictures from the roadside and the top of the truck. I thought of Malaga; a stunning defeat! How had it happened? But it was no use thinking about that now. What mattered was that somewhere this side of the captured city Loyalist lines, surely, would be reforming. Somewhere there would be new defences, more bitterly contested now. Somewhere down the road there would be fighting, rear-guard actions at the very least, wounded, dying, needed the blood we had brought from Madrid.

....We drove more quickly now and as the road banked steeply the line of refugees grew wider. Then there was a sharp turn away from the sea, a slow climb, and suddenly we breasted a hill falling away to a long level plain. Sise rammed his foot on the brake with a surprised grunt. The truck jolted to a stop against a shuddering wall of refugees and animals. They filled the entire road. Women screamed, donkeys reared, faces pressed in upon us, and as quickly as we had reached the hilltop, the wall of refugees reformed to move around the truck.

....But it was the scene below that held us speechless.

....The plain stretched into the distance as far as the eye could see, and across the plain, where the road should have been, there wriggled twenty miles of human beings, like a giant caterpillar, its many limbs raising a cloud of dust, moving slowly, ponderously, stretching from beyond the horizon, across the arid, flat country and up into the foothills.

....I hoisted myself onto the running board, shielded my eyes to look down onto the plain. Nowhere was the road visible. It was blotted out by the refugees,

thousands upon thousands of them, pressed together, falling against each other, like bees swarming in a hive, and like bees filling the plain with the hum of voices, cries, wailings, the grotesque noises of the animals.

....We began to descend slowly, Sise sounded his horn without stop. On the running board I tried to wave the refugees aside. They paid no attention to the shouts or the sound of the horn; they merely flowed around the car with downcast eyes, bumping against its sides and then spreading across the road behind it again.

....If they were from Malaga they had been walking at least five days and five nights. Was it possible? That old woman with the open ulcers on her legs — could she have survived five days and five nights on the open road? Yet there she was, her cloak trailing in the dust, swallowed up now behind the truck. And the children....of all ages, most of them barefoot — could they too have survived? Too many children! One quick glance along the road immediately ahead gave one a sickening wrench. Five squirming miles of people, and among them thousands of children!

....We drove past stragglers, families resting by the roadside, men and women huddled together, sleeping on the bare earth; through wretched villages emptied by the general retreat; alongside bomb-pits and burnt-out peasants' hovels. Then the plodding mass changed imperceptibly, like a spring suddenly filled with mud. I swore under my breath: Militiamen! At first there were only a few, lost among the refugees, but a mile further they came on in hundreds, then in thousands. Their uniforms were torn, their weapons gone, their faces covered with stubble, their eyes hollow with defeat. What were they doing among the refugees? Political irresponsibles? Deserters? I had no time to wonder, for behind the militiamen came lines of cavalry.

Horses and riders were spent. Some of the cavalrymen slouched along with their boots slung about their necks, leading their mounts, women or children clinging to the saddle. They were no longer cavalry; they were refugees like the rest, silent, grim in flight.

....The Spanish sun was as merciless as the fascists that day. The heat became a tangible, hated enemy. The road swerved back to the sea, and we heard the sound of the surf on the rocky coast again, rumbling like a distant drum beneath the sounds of the exodus.

....Now there were more sounds of panic, hurry, disorder. We had to manoeuvre around broken-down carts and abandoned trucks. Dying burros had been pushed onto the beaches below, where people lay stretched in exhaustion, their swollen tongues hanging from puckered mouths. More children, more militiamen, more deserted villages. Stopped momentarily by an obstruction on the road, we were engulfed by shouted pleas, hands reaching out towards us, people begging for water, for transport to Almeria. I threw my water canisters out of the window and we pushed ahead.

....We passed an empty bus with a militiaman at the wheel. As we passed the militiaman stuck his head out of the bus, waving his hands and shouting, "Petrol..." Sise shook his head and cried back, "Al frente!" Behind the bus a little girl crouched beside the road, all alone, howling with her thumb in her mouth. Out of the line of refugees I saw a militiaman's hand reach out and hoist her on his back. Beside the miliaman a peasant was carrying a woman over his shoulder, like a sack of potatoes.

....The coast fell away again and we drove between fields of sugar-cane. The heads of the sugar-cane swayed gently in the breeze. Green leaves drifted across the road and under the bare feet. Beside

another stalled bus a group of militiamen waved at us to turn back. Through the window we shouted the refrain, "Al frente!"

....We came out on the coastline again just as the sun mercifully began to set. The sky glowed, long tongues of flame trembled in the Mediterranean, then it was suddenly dark. We sensed the quickening pace of the refugees about us. Sise switched on the headlights. Immediately we heard angry cries: "Luz — lights!" In the besieged cities children were growing up, unaware that man had long ago conquered the darkness, and here too, on the pleasant coast that had once drawn ecstatic tourists, lights were a menace and only the black night held safety..

....Without headlights it was almost impossible to drive. We sounded the horn, we shouted, but it was no good. In an hour we moved a short distance, then we moved no further. We sat in the lorry cabin, thinking, then a group of militiamen came up, harassed, but with some semblance of discipline. They asked for our documents, examined them carefully, saluted, and reported the situation behind them. The fascists were coming eastwards swiftly, they said. The next town was Motril, and it was already in enemy hands or would be soon. There was no front; no stand was being made anywhere this side of Almeria. It was more than a rout — it was a collapse, with the southern coastal region falling like a ripe plum into the hands of Franco's foreign troops.

....The door of the lorry flew open. In the darkness a man held it with his shoulder, his eyes fixed on me, a five-year-old child in his arms. He held out the child, emaciated, shivering with fever, and began to talk quickly, the words spilling from his mouth, hoarsely at first, then his voice rising till it was like the wail of a desolate flamenco. I needed no translation; the words were universal; they would have been un-

derstood in any language: "Mi chico — muy malo....My child is very ill....He will die before I carry him to Almeria....I will stay behind....I ask only for him....Take him — leave him wherever there is a hospital....Tell them that I will follow....Tell them this one is Juan Blas and that I will come soon to find him."

....I took the child and laid him gently on the seat. The Spaniard seized my hand convulsively and made the sign of the cross over me. I needed more than Spanish to speak my heart to this stranger, to the faces coming out of the tumult and the night, the faces gathering about me, twitching with fear, to the arms reaching out like a wavering stricken forest, to the voices beseeching me.

...."Camarada....por favor....save us," they cried, and I understood their pleas without understanding the words.

...."Take our women and children....the fascists will be upon us soon...."

...."Have pity, camarada, save us, for the love of God...."

...."Let us go with you in your vehicle, we can walk no further...."

...."Camarada, los ninos — the children...."

....I hoisted myself onto the running board. They surrounded me, plucking at my clothes. The bitter thought burned in my mind: Where are they tonight, the appointed ministers to the Christian God, bearers on earth of His love and salvation — where are they, that they hear nothing of those who cry out to their Lord? Where the mercy and the conscience of a world going its sickly way?

....Words — bah! Everywhere a deluge of fat words, and under the deluge, here on Malaga road, the lost and the damned. If only I had a thousand pairs of hands, and in each hand a thousand deadly guns, and for each gun a thousand bullets, and each bullet

marked for an assigned child-killer— then I would know how to speak! From every gun in every hand I would speak death for the corrupted breed, and with a voice like Gabriel's trumpet I would roar at the ears of the slumbering world, drowning the fools and liars still spreading their clamorous deceit abroad. With a voice like Gabriel's trumpet I would awaken the indifferent millions beyond Spain's invaded borders: "Your hands are polluted with innocent blood, all you who sleep peacefully tonight. Your children will wander in their own wilderness of death and terror, all you who hear the anguish of Spain and stay silent tonight!"

....I bent down to peer at Sise across the shivering body of the child. "They're right," I said. "It's senseless now to go further. There's only one thing we can do — get as many of these people to Almeria as we can manage. We'll unload everything in the back to make room, and send the stuff along with the first ambulance that comes by. We'll take children only...."

....We turned the truck about on the narrow road, unloaded the equipment and stores of blood, and when we were finished I opened the back doors of the van. A thrill of excitement ran through the refugees, all of them waiting but none daring to hope. I inspected the van, calculated the number of people it would accomodate, and jumped to the ground. "Solamente ninos!" I announced, but the words were lost in the hubbub and I was thrown back by the sudden surge of bodies. The doors to safety had opened, and to every refugee it seemed rescue was a matter of now or never. As I fell back under their frantic charge, I flung my arms across the open doors. "Children only!"I shouted furiously, holding them off. "Ninos! Children only!" Sise came plunging to my side to help.

...."How will we manage it?" Sise panted, pushing

against the milling crowd. "They'll go mad — those left behind!"

...."No adults," I felt my voice harsh against the pleading and weeping. "There's nothing we can do except fill up with children. I'll pass them to you — let nobody else in even if you have to do it by force."

....Slowly, methodically, I fought my way into the hysterical ranks of the refugees, shouting, "Ninos — Solamente ninos!" It seemed gruesome now to decide who would go and who would stay, more terrible even than to be a helpless onlooker. "You," I called, pointing over the heads at a woman holding a baby about her neck. "We'll take your child!" Willing hands pushed her towards me. Soon I reached her, standing close in the press of bodies. "We'll take the child," I repeated, but the mother merely looked up at me with great, dark, sullen eyes and held the child tighter. Perhaps she didn't understand? I put out my arms, but still she made no move, looking up at me without expression, and I saw that the child was too young to be separated from the mother. I felt a stab of uncertainty. It was easy to say, "Children only," but this woman's dark, sunken eyes replied: "Take my child alone, and you will kill us both." I put my arms about her, opened a

way for her to the truck and into Hazen's waiting arms. "Both of them," I said and pushed into the crowd again.

....Back and forth I went, ordering, trying to soothe the women, selecting the youngest, grimly turning adults away, carrying the children in my arms. And as I filled the truck the anguished voices pursued me. I heard men and women calling for families lost somewhere in the night. Mothers whose children were in the truck stood nearby and whispered encouragement. Men who watched silently, their hopes sinking as the truck filled up, went off into the fields to throw themselves onto the ground. "Who am I to decide their fate?" I asked myself.

...."How many more?" I called to Sise.

...."Two more — with a tight squeeze."

....I felt a touch on my arm. I looked over my shoulder and saw an old face, a stooped back, tears and the unspoken inquiry glimmering through the tears. I looked at the old man, waiting for my wind to come back, then slowly shook my head. "Your face will haunt my dreams, friend," I thought, but I put aside the hand at my sleeve — an old man's hand at my sleeve like the hand of a child.

....Two more to go — and there was a sudden silence

as the truth dawned on the waiting refugees with a blinding vision: this was the silence that filled the prison courtyard as the hangman fitted the noose about his victim's neck and the spectators braced themselves for the last unbelievable act. But here there were no spectators. Here all were victims, all felt the noose tightening about their own necks.

....I passed a woman of fifty, old before her time, but still too young for death. She could hardly stand erect. Her legs were gigantic, the varicose veins visible in the darkness, knotted like swollen thongs of torture, blood seeping into the cuffs of her linen sandles. I came back to her. What if this were my own mother — how would I decide? I stood before her, touching her bony shoulder. My own mother? But if not my own, then someone else's — a mother of Spain, and therefore my own. I steadied her swaying shoulders, but she looked calmly away, as if she had nothing to ask.

....I took the last child for the last precious space — plucking it from the arms of a woman who held it, screaming, then screaming gave it up as if it was issuing once more, in blood and pain, from her very womb. I carried the child, a little girl, through the silent crowd to the truck. Suddenly a woman pushed in front of me, seized the door-jambs and clambered into the truck. I caught her ankle in mid-air and swore, but she shook free and turned about in the confined space to face me. "Get out!" I ordered, holding the child towards her. "It's you or the child! Do you understand? Will you take the place of the child?"

....The woman was young. Her long black hair fell about her pale face. She looked at me with hunted eyes, then flung open her cloak and raised her cotton shift high. Her belly was distended with child.

....For a moment we looked at each other. I with the child in my arms, she with the child in her womb. She

pressed herself down on the tiny space on flooring at her feet, her great stomach between her knees, smiled at me and held out her arms. With her eyes and her arms and her smile she seemed to be saying: "See, I will take the child, and it will be as if I am not here, as if I am taking nobody's place." She placed the girl on her knees, pillowing the little head on her shoulder.

....Now it was done. Forty children and two women were jammed together in the truck and the front cab. Half of them sat on the floor, for the remainder there was only space to stand. For better or worse, it was done.

....I banged the door shut and ordered Sise to take them directly to the hospital in Almeria and to stop for nothing and nobody. If he could pick up a few armed militiamen to ride the running boards and keep others off, all the better. He was to make sure they got food and medical attention, then report to the governor's office, inform the governor of the situation, and tell him he must send transport at once or there would be more dead from hunger and exhaustion than from enemy action. Then he was to get the tank filled with gas and come back for another load. He turned, walked to the cab without looking back, climbed in, and started the motor....

....The truck was gone, the women wept for their departed children, for the children left behind, the men hoisted the packs to their backs, they moved forward again, the thought of the enemy like a hot wind on their necks.

....At the side of the road I found the old woman with the bleeding legs. She was sitting on the ground, her head on her knees. She looked up, the same calm resignation on her gaunt face. I took a tube and bandage from my kit and bandaged her feet. "Come," I said, "it's a long way to Almeria. We'll walk a while, till it's safe for you to rest." She un-

derstood nothing of what I said, but she gave me her hands. I raised her gently, talking to her in the strange language she had never heard before.

....Together we joined the other refugees on the road, her head resting on my shoulder. Together, with the others falling in behind, we began the trek to Almeria....

.....Carried along by the stream of refugees I peered at the illuminated dial of my wristwatch. Was it only midnight? Had I been walking only four hours? Four hours that seemed like an eternity, yet the others had been walking for four days!

....I had left the old woman two hours ago when she could go no further, after making a bed of earth for her in an open field, among the many others who owned nothing now but a bed of earth. Perhaps, I thought, a stray ambulance would pick her up; perhaps, on the other hand, the fascists would reach her first.

....I had used up my last bandage, administered my last pill, given away my last chocolate bar, smoked my last cigarette, and thrown away my empty kit. I had only my bare hands now, and my impatience for Hazen's return. And then what? Then it would be like trying to drain the ocean with a thimble.

....There was a commotion on the road. I made out our truck, crawling along with the dimmed headlights. Sise jumped out, his face haggard but elated....

....Back and forth we shuttled, for four days and four nights, working furiously to evacuate the remnants of a whole city. For 48 hours Sise stayed behind the wheel while I stayed on the road, assembling the next group to be transported. We grew white-faced with lack of sleep. We lost track of time. We lived with the heart-break of those left behind, and the weary joy of those brought to safety. We worked with the knowledge that every trip might

be the last, and the fear that the evacuees furthest from the city would be swept up by the fascists.

....At every trip to Almeria, Sise stopped at the governor's office to clamour for trucks, carts, anything movable to speed the evacuation. But there was nothing left on wheels in the city.

....On the second day I decided it was no longer possible to take children only: the sight of parents separated from their children became too ghastly to bear. We began to move whole families, giving preference to those with children. On the second day we tasted too what the others had tasted for five days — hunger. There was no food to be gotten anywhere in Almeria.

....Then, as if to mock our hunger, a man appeared on the road from nowhere, pushing a cart of oranges and shouting his wares in a stentorian voice. In the midst of war, flight, death, an ordinary, prosaic street-hawker! I bought the whole cart of oranges, keeping one for myself and distributing the others.

....Thus it went for four days and nights. By day we worked in clouds of dust, under a hot sun that blistered the skin, our eyes red-rimmed, our bellies rumbling. At night the cold grew unendurable, so that we longed for the tormenting heat once more.

....A great silence settled over the refugees. The starving lay in the fields, gripped by torpor, stirring themselves only to nibble at fugitive weeds. The thirsty sat on the rocks, trembling, or staggering about aimlessly, the wild glassy stare of delusion in their eyes. The dead lay indiscriminately among the sick, looking unblinkingly into the sun. Then the planes swept overhead — glinting, silvery Italian fighters and squadrons of German Heinkels. They dived toward the road, as casually as at target-practice, their machine guns weaving intricate geometric patterns about the fleeing refugees....

....Again I saw the truck return. We piled in as

many as we could. This time I got in as well, a child on my lap, moaning, looking at me with hot feverish eyes. Probably meningitis. After a while he no longer seemed to be in pain. A bad sign. I hoped we would get him to Almeria in time. He was about seven or eight.

....I dozed, then awoke to find the truck rolling slowly downgrade. This looked like the last mile. But what a mile! From the Sierras into the city tens of thousands of refugees were fanned out like a funnel with a giant spout and a narrow, twisting stem. They swarmed over the hills, the road, the beaches below, some wading into the sea to get to the city sooner.

....Where the highway entered the city the truck could move only as the jam-packed bodies moved, inch by inch, till it seemed we had been stalled for hours. The line of refugees in front of us surged forward and we were in Almeria at last.

....In four days the city had become a vast encampment. The streets were filled with refugees who had nowhere to stay and nowhere to go. Several thousands were quartered on the main square, out in the open. Men and women rose wearily from the pavement to let us through.

....At Socorro Rojo we were directed to an old building where a hospital and reception area for the children had been improvised. We helped the refugees in and put the sick child in a doctor's care. Then I found a cot and collapsed....

....I jerked awake with a feeling of discomfort. For a moment I thought I was lying out in the hills, beside the road, but my hand slid over the rough floor and I remembered this was no longer the road but Almeria. I wondered at the ringing in my ears. From my stupor I guessed I had slept an hour or so.

....It was the wailing of the siren that had awakened me. I scrambled to my feet, and fell on my knees again as the first bomb went off. The explosion was

like a giant mailed fist smashing deep into the earth...I could hear the terrible, frightened screams of the children. In the hallway people were running and shouting. I scrambled up again, the floor still vibrating under my feet. More explosions sounded, some nearby, some distant.

....I ran through the dark corridors, jostling against people hurrying in every direction. In the dormitories children were crying with fright. I found my way into the street and made for the center of the city, on the run.

....The planes kept sweeping in, one after another, the roar of the engines filling the streets till it seemed my eardrums would burst. Then came the bombs, falling up ahead.

....I caught a glimpse of one bomber banking gracefully in the moonlight, disdaining the protection of height or darkness. The devils could afford to take their time! The occasional burst of anti-aircraft fire merely prettied up the sky like roman candles.

....In a few minutes I reached the densely populated section of the city. Here the streets were no longer dark. Great sheets of flame shot up from the skeletons of buildings, hit by incendiaries. In the glare of the burning buildings, as far as the eye could see, vast crowds of people surged about wildly, running from the bombs, going down under toppling walls, falling, crawling, disappearing into bombpits, clutching and screaming as they vanished..

....There were no sounds of bombing from the direction of the port. The bombers weren't interested in the port! They were after human prey. They were after the hundred thousand people who had eluded them at Malaga, who had refused to live under the fascists, who were now penned together here in a perfect target. For a week they had let Almeria alone. For a week they had prepared. Now that the trek from Malaga was over, now that the refugees

were caught in a few city blocks where mass murder required only a minimum number of bombs — now Franco was slaking his thirst for revenge. He cared little for the port. A port couldn't think, defy fascism or bleed. Only people had brains, hearts, courage. Kill them, maim them, show them the merciless claw of fascism....

....I fought my way through the dense crowds shouting, "Medico! Medico!" My voice was lost in the shrieking of the sirens, the explosions, the fearful braying of donkeys impaling themselves on twisted railings.

....Then suddenly the bombing stopped and the roar of the planes faded away in the sky. The flaming buildings lit up the faces of men and women looking numbed, shocked, horror stricken....

....The raid was over. My ears ached in the silence. Silence? No. With the bombing over I could hear the voices....the raid was over but the dead and dying remained....

....I bound the wounds of the injured with strips of cotton from their shirts. In a gutted house I found a little girl whimpering beneath a pile of heavy beams. She was perhaps three years old. I pulled the beams away and carried her in my arms till I came across an emergency ambulance. I laid her on the stretcher, thinking it would be kinder if she died, for if the crippled body survived, the light of sanity had gone out of her childish eyes.

....In the center of the city I came to a silent circle of men and women. Inside the circle was a great bomb crater. Inside the crater were twisted drain pipes, torn clothing, a mass of what had once been human beings....

....My body felt as heavy as the dead themselves. But empty and hollow. And in my brain there burned a bright flame of hate.

Wounds

....The kerosene lamp overhead makes a steady buzzing sound like an incandescent hive of bees. Mud walls. Mud floor. Mud bed. White paper windows. Smell of blood and chloroform. Cold. Three

o'clock in the morning, December 1, North China, near Lin Chu, with the 8th Route Army.

....Men with wounds.

....Wounds like little dried pools, caked with black-brown earth; wounds with torn edges frilled with black gangrene; neat wounds, concealing beneath the abscess in their depths, burrowing into and around the great firm muscles like a damned-back river, running around and between the muscle like a hot stream; wounds, expanding outward, decaying orchids or crushed carnations, terrible flowers of flesh; wounds from which the dark blood is spewed out in clots, mixed with the ominous gas bubbles, floating on the fresh blood of the still-continuing secondary hemorrhage.

....Old filthy bandages stuck to the skin with blood-glue. Careful. Better moisten first. Through the thigh. Pick the leg up. Why it's like a bag, a long, loose, red stocking. What kind of stocking? A Christmas stocking. Where's that fine strong rod of bone now? In a dozen pieces. Pick them out with your fingers; white as a dog's teeth, sharp and jagged. Now feel. Any more left? Yes, here. All? Yes; no, here's another piece. Is this muscle dead? Pinch it. Yes it's dead. Cut it out. How can that heal? How can those muscles, once so strong, now so torn, so devastated, so ruined, resume their proud tension? Pull, relax, Pull, relax. What fun it was! Now that is finished. Now that's done. Now we are destroyed. Now what will we do with ourselves?

....Next. What an infant. Seventeen. Shot through the belly. Chloroform. Ready? Gas rushes out of the opened peritoneal cavity. Odor of feces. Pink coils of distended intestine. Four perforations. Close them. Purse string suture. Sponge out the pelvis. Tube. Three tubes. Hard to close. Keep him warm. How? dip those bricks into hot water.

....Gangrene is a cunning, creeping fellow. Is this

one alive? Yes, he lives. Technically speaking, he is alive. Give him saline intravenously. Perhaps the innumerable tiny cells of his body will remember. They may remember the hot salty sea, their ancestral home, their first food. With the memory of a million years, they remember other tides, other oceans, and life being born of the sea and sun. It may make them raise their tired little heads, drink deep and struggle back into life again. It may do that.

....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. What will he think? He'll think what you and I would think. What's the good of pity? Don't pity him! Pity would diminish his sacrifice. He did this for the defence of China. 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.

....How beautiful the body is; how perfect its parts; with what precision it moves; how obedient, proud and strong. How terrible when torn. The little flame of life sinks lower and lower, and with a flicker, goes out. It goes out like a candle goes out. Quietly and gently. It makes its protest an extinction, then submits. It has its say, then is silent.

....Any more? Four Japanese prisoners. Bring them in. In this community of pain, there are no enemies. Cut away that blood-stained uniform. Stop that hemorrhage. Lay them beside the others. Why, they're alike as brothers! Are these soldiers professional man-killers? No, these are amateurs-in-arms. Workingman's hands. These are workers-in-uniform.

....No more. Six o'clock in the morning. God, it's cold in this room. Open the door. Over the distant, dark-blue mountains, a pale, faint line of light ap-

pears in the east. In an hour the sun will be up. To bed and sleep.

....But sleep will not come. What is the cause of this cruelty, this stupidity? A million workmen come from Japan to kill or mutilate a million Chinese workmen. Why should the Japanese worker attack his brother worker, who is forced merely to defend himself. Will the Japanese worker benefit from the death of the Chinese? No, how can he gain? Then, in God's name, who will gain? Who is responsible for sending these Japanese workmen on this murderous mission? Who will profit from it? How was it possible to persuade the Japanese workman to attack the Chinese workman — his brother in poverty; his companion in misery?

....Is it possible that a few rich men, a small class of men, have persuaded a million men to attack, and attempt to destroy, another million men as poor as they? So that these rich men can be richer still? Terrible thought! How did they persuade these poor men to come to China? By telling them the truth? No, they would never have come if they had known the truth. Did they dare to tell these workmen that the rich only wanted cheaper raw materials, more markets and more profit? No, they told them that this brutal war was "The Destiny of the Race", it was for the "Glory of the Emperor", it was for the "Honour of the State", it was for their "King and Country".

....False. False as hell!

....The agents of a criminal war of aggression, such as this, must be looked for like the agents of other crimes, such as murder, among those who are most likely to benefit from those crimes. Will the 80,000,000 workers of Japan, the poor farmers, the unemployed industrial workers — will they gain? In the entire history of the wars of aggression, from the conquest of Mexico by Spain, the capture of India by

England, the rape of Ethiopia by Italy, have the workers of those "victorious" countries ever been known to benefit? No, these never benefit by such wars.

....Does the Japanese workman benefit by the natural resources of even his own country?, by the gold, the silver, the iron, the coal, the oil? Long ago he ceased to possess that natural wealth. It belongs to the rich, the ruling class. The millions who work those mines live in poverty. So how is he likely to benefit by the armed robbery of the gold, silver, iron, coal and oil from China? Will not the rich owners of the one retain from their profit the wealth of the other? Have they not always done so?

....It would seem inescapable that the militarists and the capitalists of Japan are the only class likely to gain by this mass murder, this authorized madness, this sanctified butchery. That ruling class, the true state, stands accused.

....Are wars of aggression, wars for the conquest of colonies, then, just big business? Yes, it would seem so, however much the perpetrators of such national crimes seek to hide their true purpose under banners of high-sounding abstractions and ideals. They make war to capture markets by murder; raw materials by rape. They find it cheaper to steal than to exchange; easier to butcher than to buy. This is the secret of war. This is the secret of all wars. Profit. Business. Blood money.

....Behind all stands that terrible, implacable God of Business and Blood, whose name is Profit. Money, like any insatiable Moloch, demands its interest, its return, and will stop at nothing, not even the murder of millions, to satisfy its greed. Behind the army stand the militarists. Behind the militarists stand finance capital and the capitalists. Brother in blood; companions in crime.

....What do these enemies of the human race look

like? Do they wear on their foreheads a sign so that they may be told, shunned and condemned as criminals? No. On the contrary, they are the respectable ones. They are honored. They call themselves, and are called, gentlemen. What a travesty on the name, Gentlemen! They are the pillars of the state, of the church, of society. They support private and public charity out of the excess of their wealth. They endow institutions. In their private lives they are kind and considerate. They obey the law, their law, the law of property. But there is one sign by which these gentle gunmen can be told. Threaten a reduction on the profit of their money and the beast in them awakes with a snarl. They become ruthless as savages, brutal as madmen, remorseless as executioners. Such men as these must perish if the human race is to continue. There can be no permanent peace in the world while they live. Such an organization of human society as permits them to exist must be abolished.

....These men make the wounds.

In Memory of Norman Bethune

December 21, 1939

Mao TseTung

Comrade Norman Bethune, a member of the Communist Party of Canada, was around fifty when he was sent by the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States to China; he made light of travelling thousands of miles to help us in our War of Resistance Against Japan. He arrived in Yenan in the spring of last year, went to work in the Wutai Mountains, and to our great sorrow died a martyr at his post. 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.

Leninism teaches that the world revolution can only succeed if the proletariat of the capitalist countries supports the struggle for liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and if the proletariat of the colonies and the semi-colonies supports that of the proletariat of the capitalist countries. Comrade Bethune put this Leninist line into practice. We Chinese Communists must also follow this line in our practice. We must unite with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other 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, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

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. There are not a few people who are irresponsible in their work, preferring the light to the heavy, shoving the heavy loads on to others and choosing the easy ones for themselves. At every turn they think of themselves before others When they make some small contribution, they swell with pride and brag about it for fear that others will not know. They feel no warmth towards comrades and the people but are cold, indifferent and apathetic. In fact such people are not Communists, or at least cannot be counted as true Communists. No one who returned from the front failed to express admiration for Bethune whenever his name was mentioned, and none remained unmoved by his spirit. In the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei border area, no soldier or civilian was unmoved who had been treated by Dr. Bethune or had seen how he worked. Every Communist must

learn this true Communist spirit fromComrade Bethune.

Comrade Bethune was a doctor, the art of healing was his profession and he was constantly perfecting his skill, which stood very high in the Eighth Route Army's medical service. His example is an excellent lesson for those people who wish to change their work the moment they see something different and for those who despise technical work as of no consequence or as promising no future..

Comrade Bethune and I met only once. 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. 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.

Alive Press Limited, Guelph, Ontario