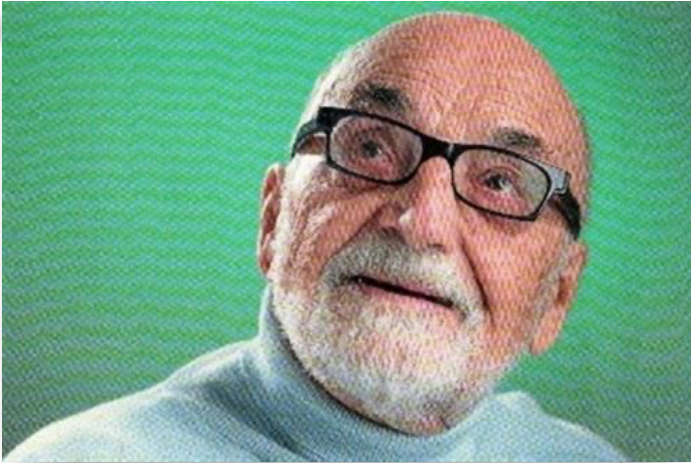


JOHN BOYD

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BOYD, JOHN January 26, 1913 - May 26, 2021 John was reluctant to leave after 108 amazing years on the planet. He often said: "I want to know what's going to happen next." How to sum up such a life? This will only touch on moments. John was a compassionate, kind, creative man who wore numerous fine hats. He was a political thinker, a wordsmith, a dairy co-op manager, and an artist. He was a quipper, a jokester, a lover, and a mandolin player. He was a formidable Scrabble player, an early adapter to the internet, a furniture designer, and a carpenter. Above all, he was a dedicated communist activist from age 15, including forty years as a full-time staffer, committed to the cause of social justice. Born to socialist Ukrainian immigrants in Edmonton, by age 17 John was a Communist Party youth activist, travelling the west on an educational tour. At age 19, he formed an enduring bond with Gladys Kucheran, his great love and partner in life and politics. At 21, with his superb language skills, he became editor of the party youth paper, the beginning of a 50-year journalism career. Going on to edit the majority of CP newspapers and magazines, John was best known for his tenure with the Canadian Tribune. During the 40s, he was twice elected to the Toronto School Board as a communist, despite a right-wing campaign against him. In 1944, he joined the Army where he edited The Signalman, until his discharge. In 1948, as director of the Canadian Slav Committee, John became involved in the abundant artistic world of Canada's Slavic groups. A natural

organizer and impresario, he introduced outstanding Soviet musicians and films to an unexposed Canadian audience. John and Gladys' family was generous of spirit and time, their extended household a revolving door, bustling with friends, boarders, visiting comrades, and occasional celebrities such as Paul Robeson. The house was filled with radical discourse – and always music. From childhood, John was immersed in the culture and philosophy of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC), which became an honoured arena for his family's vibrant musical and social life, and the source of valued, lasting friendships. He was thrilled to see the opening of the acclaimed Shevchenko Museum in 2019. John's political journey took him around the globe; to China long before it was open to the West, where he met Mao Zedong and Chou En-lai; to the Soviet republics where he interviewed Khrushchev; and to Cuba where he toasted the Revolution with Fidel. During a transformative period in Prague (1967-68) with World Marxist Review, John and Gladys made exciting new friends and experienced the democratization movement of the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which challenged John's long-held theoretical assumptions and led to his departure from the Communist Party. It wasn't all politics in this period. Stimulated by the rich cultural life of Prague, he took up painting seriously with several sold-out art shows over the next twenty years. After leaving the CP, John became editor of Hospital Administration in Canada and later public relations director at Extendicare. Yet, as a lifelong fighter for socialism, he continued to study Marxism and the phenomenon of Stalinism, gaining new fervour for the struggle against capitalism. During this new period, John and Gladys, along with sister Natalie and brother-in-law Paul, bought an old cottage on Little Hawk Lake which offered him a whole new perspective. He built a sauna, learned to boat, and to relax into nature, savouring his time there with family and friends. In 1979, John and Gladys moved to

Woodsworth Housing Co-op where John sat on the board, edited the Woodsworth Weekly, became the co-op's mentor, and displayed his acting chops in the Woodsworth Players production of "You Can't Take It With You." While John's life was filled with rare and gratifying experiences, there were also devastating personal losses: the death of adored young brother Terry at age 27; of his dear sister-in-law and friend, Helen Weir, at age 63; and the heartbreak of Gladys' death at 72, after 52 years of a rich and fulfilling marriage. His ultimate sorrow was the early death of his two brilliant sons, with whom he was intimately connected. Kim died from pancreatic cancer at age 57. A decade later, after a forty-year struggle with mental health and addiction, Zane's life also ended at age 59. Despite these losses, John remained hopeful about life. He enjoyed relationships with captivating, intelligent women, and after Gladys' death, found companionship again with co-op developer and NDP activist Jean Melbye. John had three wonderful years with Jean and her much-loved children, which tragically ended with her death. Eventually, he was fortunate in finding love yet again and had ten prized years, until the end of his life, with the nurturing and spirited Dorothy Bloch. Family members were more than a niece, brother, cousin. They were friends across generations. He delighted in the company of grandson, Sean, and his children, Bella and Jasmin, so proud of the kind and compassionate adults they had all become. Everyone was inspired by John's energy and insatiable curiosity about advances in science, technology, culture and social movements. He was an early feminist and supporter of the women's liberation movement. In recent years, he was inspired by the youth radicalization, the global struggle against climate change, Me Too, and Black Lives Matter movements. He was full of pride that all three children, Bonnie, Kim, and Zane, dedicated their lives to anti-capitalist struggles. He wrote: "I'm an optimist. I believe that future generations – those of my two great granddaughters and those that follow - will find

a way to challenge the greed and corruption and injustice in the world, and know that some of my efforts for a better society will not have been in vain." Mourned by everyone who knew John, he was the treasured father of Bonnie Boyd and son-in-law Norman Wilson, beloved grandpa to Sean Mossman Boyd (Kayla) and great granddaughters Bella (Billy) and Jasmin (Rakeem) Hawkesboyd. Adored uncle/father to Lorna Clark. Precious second dad to Diane Mossman. Admired uncle/guru to his dear nieces, nephews and their children. Predeceased by dearest brother Ronny Boychuk, and dearly loved sister Natalie and brother-in-law and friend Paul Siren; cherished nephew Chuck Weir; and beautiful nieces Terry-Ann Watt and Paula Woolley, lost so young. Our family deeply appreciates the marvellous health care team at Sunnybrook Veterans' Centre for their five years of exemplary care and love of John. Particularly during this past year of isolation, their art and music therapy contributed so much to his wellbeing. We're gratified that John's final wish was achieved. His most excellent brain was donated to Sunnybrook's Brain Sciences Research Program. There is no memorial planned. For a brief autobiography by John: <https://www.facebook.com/john.boyd.5623> For John's detailed political memoir: <https://socialisthistory.ca/Remember/Reminiscences/Boyd>

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MEMORIES & CONDOLENCES