

◀ hearing Edward R. Morrow and Charles Collingwood describe the devastation from the Luftwaffe bombs that had rained down upon it the previous night. Our days were filled with continuous, contentious bull-sessions on the morality and ramifications of the war and whether the U.S. should declare war on Germany. (Japan, known only as an Axis partner, was hardly given a thought.)

Campus politics in those days reflected a conflicted nation and opposing political messages, with the America-First isolationist sentiment being espoused despite (or perhaps because of) the gradual and increasing shift in our national economy to a war footing, to provide lend-lease aid to Great Britain, the remaining unoccupied democracy in Europe. As students we knew of the concentration camps but were unaware then, as was the nation, of their eventual horrific purpose as death camps and of the Final Solution planned for the Jews of Europe. We were equally unaware of the secret research going on in America, especially on our campus, in the field of nuclear fission, eventually leading to the development of the atomic bomb.

We (our crowd) were generally anti-war activists of the Socialist Party ilk, rallying around that popular social science instructor Maynard Krueger, the vice-presidential candidate on the Socialist Party ticket headed by Norman Thomas. Of course, we insisted that our pacifism was different from the vitriolic isolationism of Charles Lindbergh and the America Firsters, and as it happened, even our university president, Robert M. Hutchins, was vehemently anti-war. Early in 1941, according to the Daily Maroon, he appeared on the American Town Hall of the Air, with Col. William Donovan (later of OSS fame) to debate the question, "Should we do whatever is necessary to insure a British victory?" Hutchins took the negative position. The paper didn't say who won the debate.

But we had no difficulty separating ourselves from the pro-Communist fellow-travelers of the American Students Union who, up until June 22, 1941, were also vitriolically against the war in Europe ("The British are as fascist as the Germans and Italians!"). But in a single day after that date, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the organization made a 180-degree about-face and changed its line in the blink of an eye to rabid support of every war preparedness effort taken or envisioned, denouncing any labor union which even contemplated strike action, screaming "Defeat Fascism" with abandon.

But while we talked and argued about the war constantly, more mundane living adjustments occupied much of our time. The high cost of living was a pressing constant for those of us on limited

budgets and many of us happily became part of what was then a growing student cooperative movement, seen as one solution to the problem of finding affordable room and board.

In 1941, a two-story stone building on the northwest corner of 56th and Ellis already housed an eating cafeteria on the ground floor, a consumer cooperative governed by the democratic Rochdale Principles. There students could, after paying a minimum membership fee, eat lunch and dinner at prices cheap enough to fit into even the most skimpy living allowance.

On the second floor of that building was the Ellis Housing Co-op, also a consumer cooperative, which men (only) could join and rent a single or double sleeping room for very low cost. (In a Maroon article in 1943, Ellis Co-op rents were quoted as from \$8.50 to \$11.50 a week; in '41, they must have been less.)

A third cooperative four blocks to the north, at 52nd and Ellis, the University Housing Co-op, provided more housing for men. Julius lived there, tending the furnace and doing houseman chores in exchange for a free room.

Sometime in the spring or summer of 1941, a group of women decided it was their turn. With the ready assistance of the men from both housing co-ops (not an insignificant incentive), they organized a women's housing co-op. I heard about the group after the initial planning and furniture accumulation was already done—but did manage to be in the first group of women who moved into Woodlawn House at 5711 Woodlawn that fall. As such, we made long-since-forgotten history by not only founding the first women's co-op on campus but, after the first quarter, becoming the first women's housing available on the University of Chicago campus run sans housemother.

In 1941, men were registering for the peace-time draft, faculty members were leaving for Washington for duty with the newly formed defense agencies, and refugee celebrities from Europe flooded the campus, to lecture and to work, beg, exhort us all to save their shattered compatriots in Europe. One such was Jan Maseryk, the son of the man who founded Czechoslovakia in the 1920s, who, having escaped the Nazis, became a political science lecturer on campus. (When the war ended, he returned triumphantly to a free Czechoslovakia and was elected president of the country, only to have his country invaded by the Russians and he himself murdered by the Communists, who replaced the Nazis in occupying his country in post-war Europe.)

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the declaration of war against Japan and its Axis partners, Germany and Italy, stunned us all. From