

# Food poverty and hunger in the UK: lessons

Race to the bottom

## Reality check

- So what's the problem the supermarket shelves are full
- The discounters are growing
- There is a supermarket price war with prices returning to 2007 levels
- But the pressure on supermarkets results in job losses and farmers absorbing costs estimate 4000 jobs lost in retail in the last 3 months



Tesco	Annual results				Market share	
Share price and index (rebased)	Year to Feb 2009				UK grocery market shares	
110	Revenue (ex VAT)	Up	Net debt	Up from	Tesco	30.4%
100	£54.3bn	13.4%*	£9.6bn	£6.2bn	Asda	17.5%
90	Underlying profit	Up	Pension scheme deficit (post tax)	Up from	Sainsbury	16.1%
80	£3.1bn	8.8%*	£1.1bn	£0.6bn	Morrisons	11.8%
70	Pre-tax profit	Up	US operations trading loss	Up from		
60	£3.0bn	4.3%*	£142m	£62m		
Mar 2008	Sources: Thomson Reuters				* Adjusted to 52 week year	
09 Apr	Datastream; company; TNS World Panel					

## Starting position

- *In the same vein we must seriously examine the role of food banking, which requires that we no longer praise its growth as a sign of our generosity and charity, but instead recognize it as a symbol of our society's failure to hold government accountable for hunger, food insecurity and poverty (Winne, 2009).*
- Winne, M. (2009). *Closing the food gap: Resetting the table in the land of plenty*. Boston: Beacon Press.

## From the Countess Kathleen by W.B. Yeats (1982)

- *It's time that poverty should bolt the door... (p10)*
- *If we knew how to find deserving poor*
- *We'd do our share...*
- *We know the evils of mere charity (p13)*

## UK food poverty

- One in five families live below the poverty line putting them at risk of food poverty; 14 million individuals and within this over 4 million children are at risk and 4 million suffer from serious nutrient related health problems
- Food benefits ***free school meals*** and ***Healthy Start*** + free fruit and veg, but under threat in the guise of reform.
- People go hungry and are overweight- *the same groups*.
- The link is greatest between poverty and outcomes such as obesity

## Food prices and changes

- Between 2007 and 2012 food prices rose 25%.
- Between 1998 and 2009 household income for low income households rose 22% to £208/week before housing costs but food prices rose by 33%.
- We estimated that a low income family would be disproportionately effected by a 5% increase by about 40%

# For low income households there is a race to the bottom

- Households saved an average of 4% between 2007 and 2010 **by trading down to cheaper products.**
- While trading down to cheaper products has helped many people offset some of the food price rises, low income households have not managed to trade down, possibly as they were already buying cheaper products. The lowest income decile (bottom 10%) on average bought less food rather than trading down. Energy content of their household food fell 8.7% between 2007 and 2010, as they cut back on bread, cereals, biscuits, cake, beef, fruit and vegetables.
- Falling income and static welfare benefits (after housing costs) and rising food prices produced a double effect, reducing food affordability by over 20% for lowest income decile households.
- Low-income households bought more alcoholic drinks despite food price rises, possibly because prices for alcoholic drinks rose less than prices of food.
- **Now trading down means.....???**

*Help us support people in Maidenhead  
who are in crisis and need food*

Working closely with local charities and social groups, we provide food parcels to those families who are going hungry in Maidenhead right now.

Please buy and/or donate any of the following

- Breakfast cereals
- Tea bags
- Sugar
- UHT milk
- Rice / Pasta
- Pasta sauces
- Herbs/Spices
- Soup
- Tinned meat / fish
- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned tomatoes
- Instant mash
- Tinned desserts
- Biscuits / Snack bars
- Jams
- Fruit juice

Please deliver food to

Co-Op Funeral Home, Quench, Maidenhead Advertiser (Bell Street),  
Sainsburys, Most Churches,  
Council Offices  
Foodshare Premises will soon be opening on a Saturday from  
10am to 12 noon to take deliveries.

*If you would like to donate money, go to [purecharity.org/foodshare](http://purecharity.org/foodshare)  
If you have questions or would like to help in any other way,  
please contact Sue Brett at [foodshare@openkitchen.org.uk](mailto:foodshare@openkitchen.org.uk)*

Maidenhead's Foodshare and Open Kitchen are projects run by Open Charity  
Reg Office : PO Box 2382, Slough PDO, SL1 8WD | Reg Charity No: 1142868 | Web : [www.openkitchen.org.uk](http://www.openkitchen.org.uk)



**Open Kitchen**  
FOODSHARE

Helping hungry  
families locally

**One item  
a week**



"Without our Food parcels my children would go hungry."  
Sue, Maidenhead





# We Can't Let This Bank Fail!

Seldom in our lifetime have we seen an economic situation so dire, with more families than ever struggling to put food on the table. The painful combination of an unstable economy, layoffs and rising food prices has left many having to make heart-wrenching choices:

- Food or rent?
- Food or utilities?
- Food or medicine?

More often than not, food takes a back seat.

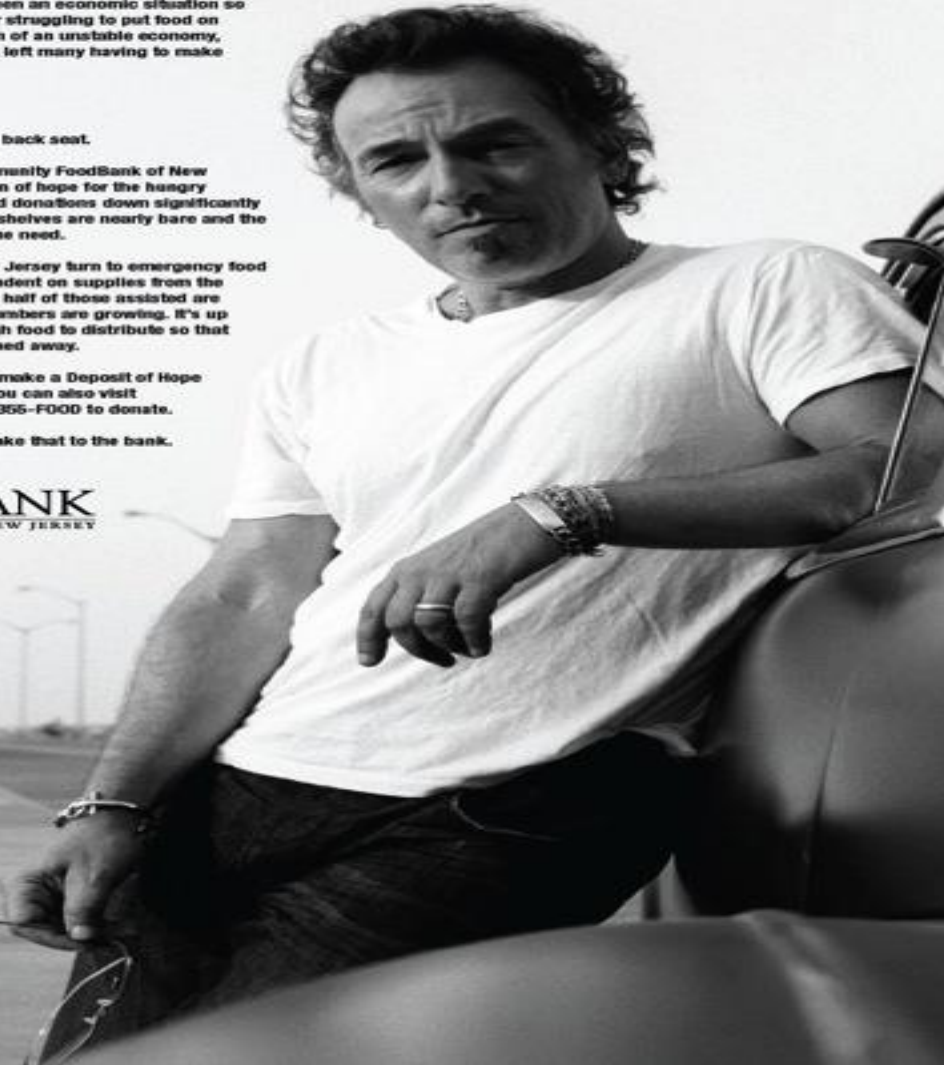
For more than 25 years, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) has been a beacon of hope for the hungry families in the state. But with food donations down significantly and demand up 30 percent, their shelves are nearly bare and the FoodBank is struggling to meet the need.

More than 500,000 people in New Jersey turn to emergency food pantries and soup kitchens dependent on supplies from the Community FoodBank. More than half of those assisted are children and the elderly. Those numbers are growing. It's up to us to make sure there is enough food to distribute so that our hungry neighbors are not turned away.

They need your help now. Please make a Deposit of Hope by filling out the coupon below. You can also visit [www.njfoodbank.org](http://www.njfoodbank.org) or call 908-355-FOOD to donate.

The payoff will feed your soul...take that to the bank.

COMMUNITY  
**FOOD BANK**  
OF NEW JERSEY



## But

- About 8 out of 10 living in food poverty don't use a food bank or charity provision, they rely on family networks and credit/savings /borrowing. **The Working Poor**
- Charity does not deal with food poverty it at best tackles some issues of immediate want.
- It is not dignified and we still have a welfare state and a right to food under international law.

# DIGNITY

ENDING HUNGER TOGETHER IN SCOTLAND

The Report of the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty  
June 2016



**“Mum, Dad, have we reached the bottom yet?”**



# BMJ Open Do healthier foods and diet patterns cost more than less healthy options? A systematic review and meta-analysis

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of prices of healthier versus less healthy foods/diet patterns while accounting for key sources of heterogeneity.

**Data sources:** MEDLINE (2000–2011), supplemented with expert consultations and hand reviews of reference lists and related citations.

**Design:** Studies reviewed independently and in duplicate were included if reporting mean retail price of foods or diet patterns stratified by healthfulness. We extracted, in duplicate, mean prices and their uncertainties of healthier and less healthy foods/diet patterns and rated the intensity of health differences for each comparison (range 1–10). Prices were adjusted for inflation and the World Bank purchasing power parity, and standardised to the international dollar (defined as US\$1) in 2011. Using random effects models, we quantified price differences of healthier versus less healthy options for specific food types, diet patterns and units of price (serving, day and calorie). Statistical heterogeneity was quantified using I<sup>2</sup> statistics.

**Results:** 27 studies from 10 countries met the inclusion criteria. Among food groups, meats/protein had largest price differences: healthier options cost \$0.20/serving (95% CI \$0.10 to \$0.40) and \$0.47/

## Strengths and limitations of this study

- This systematic review and meta-analysis represents, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive examination of the evidence on prices of more versus less healthy foods and diet patterns. The strengths include the systematic search; adjustment for inflation and purchasing power parity; separate analyses of food groups, diet patterns and units of price; and evaluation of heterogeneity by food type, intensity of contrast and unit of comparison.
- The study was limited by less available data on restaurant prices and prices from low-income and middle-income countries. High statistical heterogeneity was evident, although the actual observed range of price differences was more modest.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumption of a healthy diet is a priority for reducing chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and several cancers. This is especially crucial for socio-economically disadvantaged populations, who have less healthy diets and higher disease risk

# So what's been happening

- Food bank plus models
- More lobbying –missed opportunity the focus has been on member/volunteers
- Alternative modes of provision eg social supermarkets
- Attacks on welfare and **local discretionary funds** loss of FSMs and £10 billion removed from the budget by 2020 by changing entitlement
- Demonisation of the poor, stories about waste and fraud –eg benefit street

# The social cost of poverty – paint the picture



## The cost of a healthy food basket

Pilot study of two household types in Northern Ireland



- The cost of a food bank emergency food parcel (extrapolated for seven days) is much reduced from that of a consensually agreed, nutritionally adequate diet.
- In comparing the cost of a pensioner living alone (£57.05) to a food bank's lowest-priced one week food list (£17.66) it is appreciable that a nutritious diet is three times more expensive than the emergency food parcels distributed by foodbanks.
- Similarly, comparing the average UK household's food expenditure (£56.80) to the cost of a food bank diet (£17.66) illustrates well the shortfall in the standard of living between the two dietary experiences.

# Food on a low income

Four households tell their story

Summary Report



*“Shopping is a chore, it has to be done. I want to be in and out in 20 minutes.”*

Two-parent family, Belfast

*“I buy those pies that you can just throw in the oven and there is your meal”.*

Two-parent family, Belfast

*“Pizza from Iceland, they are only £1 and you can get a load of them – do them all week.”*

Lone parent, Belfast

*“You work out your Monday to Friday dinners before going shopping. I write a list if I’m short of money that week because you are only buying necessities, not buying any luxuries.”*

Lone Parent, Belfast

*“I find when you go to a big supermarket you buy more. You tend to put a lot of shopping in, so you would, so maybe when you come home you say ‘God knows what I spent’ and then you would think the rest of the week, well, I’ll have to make that do, y’know?”*

Single older female, Cushendall

*“Iceland is not so bad because they’ve no toys or anything. Tesco have computer games, DVDs, toys”.*

Lone parent, Belfast



# Now an irony

# Celebrating Outcomes

Celebrating the contribution of community food initiatives towards meeting national outcomes for Scotland



You are here: [Home](#) > [Professional](#) > [Nutrition](#) > [Food Poverty](#) > Community Food Initiatives



## Programme of Community Food Initiatives

The Community Food Initiatives Programme aims to positively influence the eating habits of families in low income communities by making food skills more mainstream and healthy food more accessible. **safefood** will be funding 13 projects through the course of 2016-18. As well as increasing awareness and knowledge around healthy eating, these projects will promote healthy shopping, improved meal-planning and budgeting as well as enhanced cooking skills. All of these are tangible, transferable skills that can benefit an entire community.

The Community Food Initiatives will be administered at a local level by South & East Cork Area Development (SECAD). Each Community Food Initiative will receive funding annually over a period of three years to set up, manage and sustain their project with **safefood** investing up to €30,000 in each of the 13 projects over the lifetime of the initiative.

In total, 17 projects on the island of Ireland have already received funding since the first three-year Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives from 2010-12 and successive programme from 2013-15. Key learnings and experiences from these previous programmes will be shared among the new projects and they will be encouraged and supported to enhance the long-term sustainability of their project from the outset.

## Background on the 2016-2018 Community Food Initiatives

### Carlow County Development Partnership, Co Carlow

Over the three years, parents and young people will learn how to eat healthily on a budget, children will be encouraged to choose a healthy option through making growing and cooking food fun, and everyone will discover that healthy eating choices can improve both their physical and mental health and ultimately improve their life chances.

### Inishowen Development Partnership, Inishowen, Co Donegal

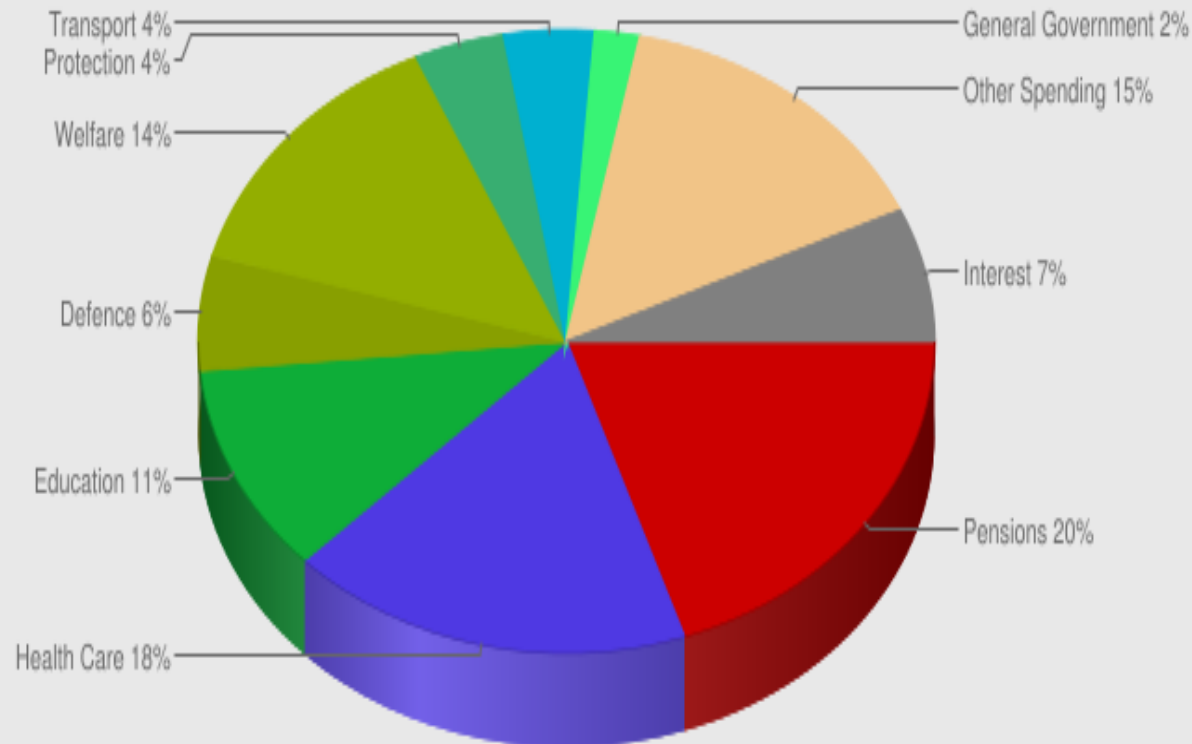
It is hoped that our CFI project will result in families adopting a healthier lifestyle and that they will make healthier food choices, increase their physical activity levels and build the confidence to change.

# So good practices

- Defence of welfare and its role in creating a healthy and equitable society
- Reality of a cost of a consensual socially acceptable food basket
- Minimum income and right to an adequate income can be reframed as a right to goods and services!
- Social supermarkets on the continent – different model 1200 in France/Belgium
- Local food and closed networks ala the Scottish Community Diet project, eg NI and Sustainable Cities
- Lobbying

# Coherent narrative missing

Spending: Total Pie Chart for - FY 2018



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## EDITORIALS

### Sugar, salt, and the limits of self regulation in the food industry

Globally, policies are shifting towards mandatory reformulation, subsidies, and taxation

Martin Caraher *professor of food and health policy*<sup>1</sup>, Ivan Perry *professor of public health*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>City University, London, UK; <sup>2</sup>University College Cork, Ireland

A recent report from Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) shows that only one out of the 28 food categories surveyed are on track to meet Public Health England's (PHE) 2017 salt reduction targets.<sup>1</sup> The food industry will also fail to hit a PHE target to achieve a 20% reduction in sugar content across nine food categories—including breakfast cereals, cakes, and yogurts—by 2020, confirming the long held view of some experts that voluntary agreements aren't working and we should now move from soft to hard regulation.<sup>2</sup>

Modest progress towards reducing the salt content of the British diet has stalled, and efforts to reach agreement with the food industry on a voluntary reformulation strategy for sugar look unlikely to succeed. This is not surprising because voluntary agreements between industry and government (including the UK public health responsibility deal) have been shown repeatedly to be ineffective in improving public health.<sup>3</sup> Sharma and colleagues have suggested minimum standards for any effective food industry self regulation, including transparency, meaningful objectives, accountability, objective evaluation, and independent oversight.<sup>4</sup> However, failed attempts at voluntary agreements on tobacco, alcohol, and food show that strategies based on self regulation are typically self serving, deceptive, and generally designed to stall government legislation and protect business as usual.<sup>4</sup>

Our best hope of achieving ongoing reductions in the salt and sugar content of processed foods lies in mandatory regulation and taxation in specific areas, as advocated by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Any partnership between government and the food industry should be supported by mandatory 2020 targets for the salt and sugar content of processed foods and taxes on specific food items that contribute disproportionately to consumption.<sup>6</sup> The sugary drinks levy (scheduled for April 2018) will not be enough without concurrent public health interventions.

Sugar is a global problem.<sup>6</sup> Nineteen countries have already introduced so called sin taxes on food and drinks, and more are likely to follow, with the aim of reducing sugar consumption by 20%.<sup>7</sup> Globally, we may be at the start of a long overdue

shift towards food policy actions upstream, including mandatory reformulation, subsidies, and taxation.

The food industry response to these developments is that initiatives such as the sugary drink tax in Mexico<sup>8</sup> and the saturated fat tax in Denmark<sup>9</sup> have not resulted in demonstrable improvements in health and have the potential to cause job losses in affected sectors. Fortunately, evidence exists to counter these narratives, including data from Mexico showing that a 10% tax on sugar sweetened beverages (equivalent to 1 peso (4p) per litre of sugary drink) was associated with a decline in purchases averaging 7.6% over two years<sup>8</sup> with the biggest effect on the poorest households. Denmark's tax on saturated fat didn't survive, but research published soon after it was repealed showed that consumption of saturated fat had declined in Denmark while the levy was in force.<sup>9,10</sup>

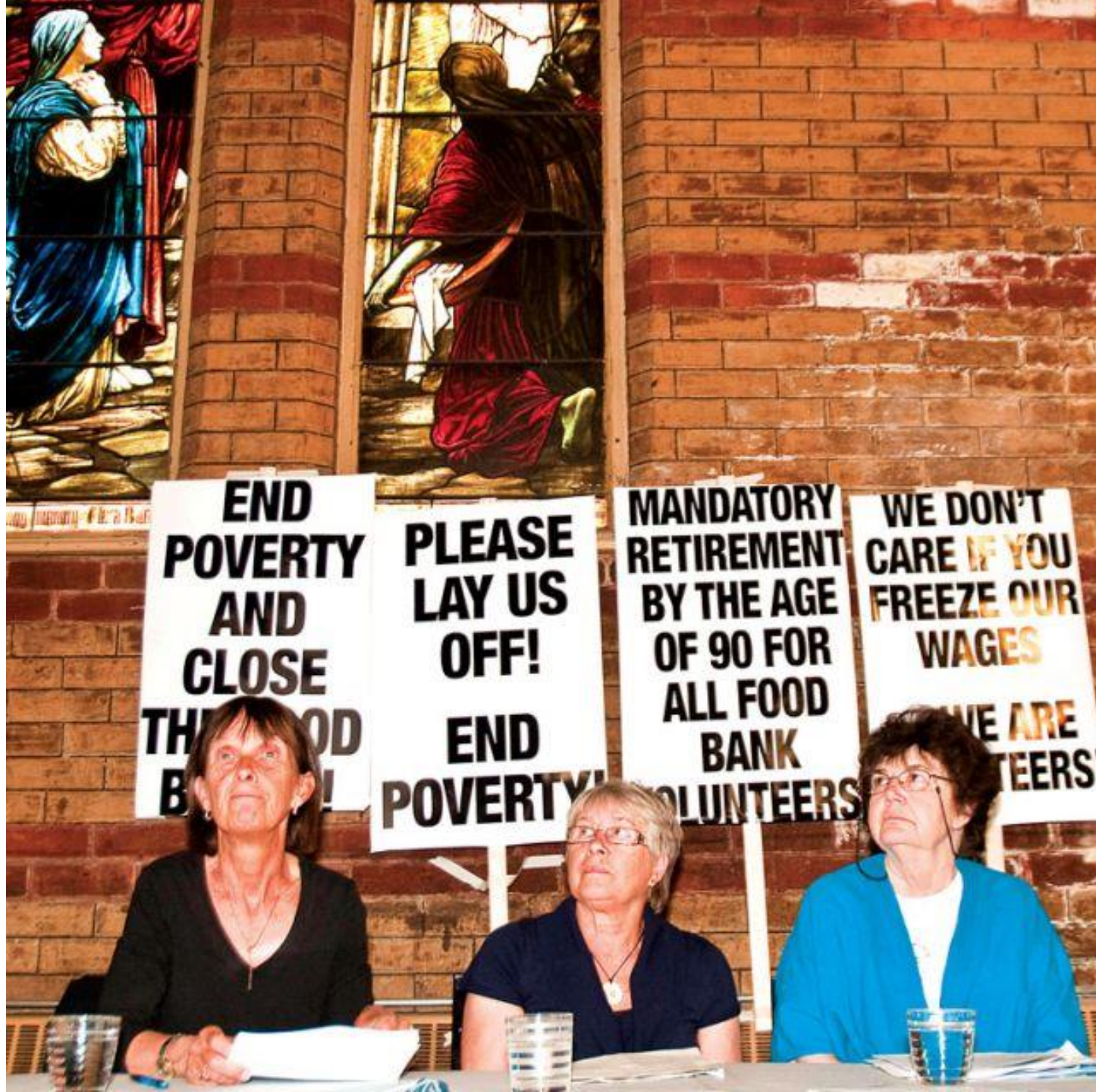
The core issue is not about the effectiveness or otherwise of taxes on unhealthy foods but about what Smith terms the war of ideas.<sup>11</sup> Industry arguments often fall back on ideas of personal freedom. Strategies include reframing soft drinks or fat taxes as issues of consumer rights and examples of the alleged excesses of the "nanny state" and then promoting public-private partnerships and corporate social responsibility deals that essentially allow the "fox to guard the hen house."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the evidence from authoritative studies, we need a clear, simple, and compelling narrative opposing these misleading arguments in a way that resonates with the general public and policy makers. Perhaps we need greater emphasis on the idea of healthy food as a matter of children's rights.

Two recent developments show this war of ideas in action. The first was high profile media reports of industry representatives saying that a 20% sugar cut "won't be technically possible or acceptable to UK consumers," and that even a 5% cut would not be universally achievable.<sup>13</sup> Then, a week later, PHE published a document outlining progress in consultations with industry and the development of a sugar reduction programme.<sup>14</sup> The document includes no sanctions or legislation to guide such reductions. It is effectively toothless and shows the importance of timing, framing, and publicity in gaining the upper hand.

# The power of the lobby

- Freedom 90, Ontario's 'union' \* of food bank and emergency meal program volunteers made three demands (see the detail on <http://www.freedom90.ca/demands.html>)
- 1. *Lay us off!*
- *The Government of Ontario must ensure that social assistance and minimum wage levels are sufficient for everyone to have adequate housing and to buy their own food.*
- 2. *Mandatory retirement by the age of 90!*
- *Many of us have been volunteering for twenty years and there is no end in sight. The Freedom 90 Union demands the Government of Ontario take urgent action to end poverty and make food banks and emergency meal programs unnecessary.*
- 3. *Freeze our wages! Or double them!*
- \* This is not a formal trade union but a union or joining together of volunteers working in food banks.



**END  
POVERTY  
AND  
CLOSE  
THE FOOD  
BANK**

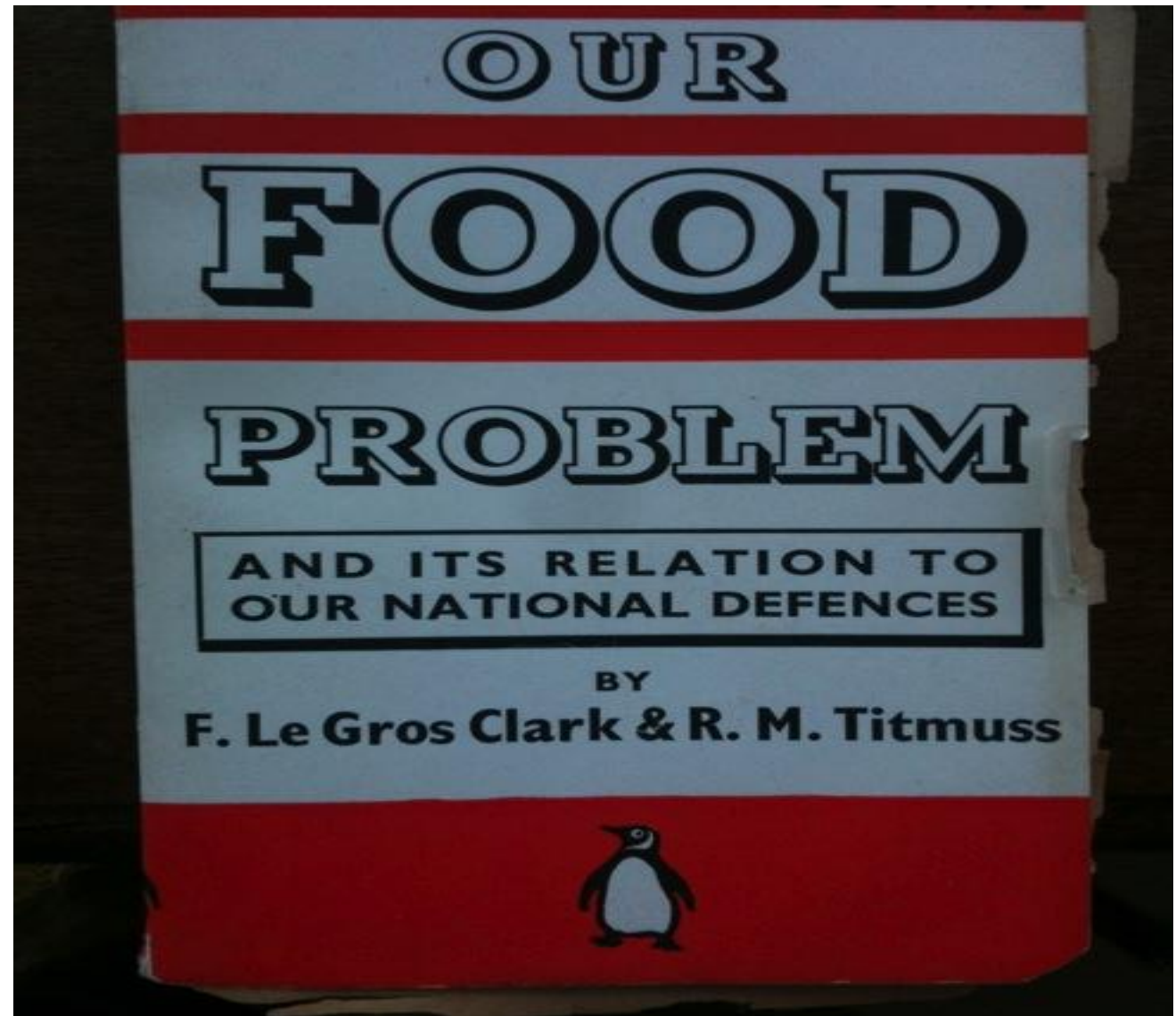
**PLEASE  
LAY US  
OFF!  
END  
POVERTY!**

**MANDATORY  
RETIREMENT  
BY THE AGE  
OF 90 FOR  
ALL FOOD  
BANK  
VOLUNTEERS**

**WE DON'T  
CARE IF YOU  
FREEZE OUR  
WAGES  
WE ARE  
TEERS**

# Le Gros Clark and Titmuss -1939

- Reconfigure 'what we know' to be radical and inclusive.
- There are only two further ways of making food more available. The first is to **lower the prices of foodstuffs** upon the retail market; the second is to **provide food to certain sections of the community through the medium of the social services**. There is no reason, of course, why these methods should be mutually exclusive ... page 166
- The basis of the welfare state, food as a right - post WWII



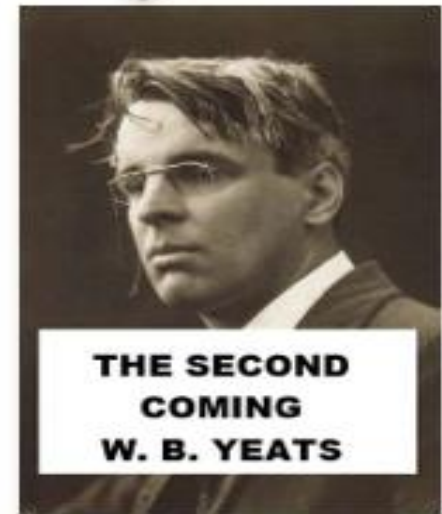
# Suggestions for a food security alliance?

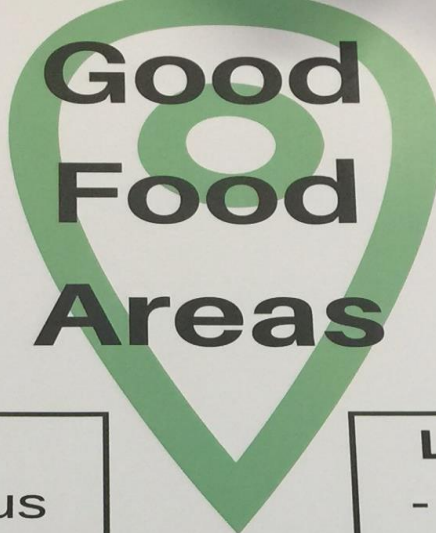
- Respond to the crisis not the symptoms
- Develop short term solutions with long term benefits
- Develop a city strategy with a strong advocacy element
- Reconfigure 'what we know' to be radical and inclusive.
- There are only two further ways of making food more available. The first is to lower the prices of foodstuffs upon the retail market; the second is to provide food to certain sections of the community through the medium of the social services. There is no reason, of course, why these methods should be mutually exclusive ... page 166

The basis of the welfare state, food as a right - post WWII



*Things fall apart the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and  
everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity*





**Food**

- stops food waste
  - produces only fresh food
  - caters large scale
- produces own-range meals

**Social impact**

- stops food poverty
- provides everybody with fresh food
- prevents malnutrition
- prevents isolation
- offers social income

**Farms**

- produce/surplus

**Local suppliers**

- produce/surplus

**Production Kitchen**

**Schools**

- food delivery in
- kitchen management

**Nurseries**

- food delivery in

**Adult social care**

- care homes
- safety box

**Good Food Hubs**

- Good Food Bank
- Meals on Wheels

**Good Food Shops**

- Everybody shops subsidy

# Why should not Old Men be Mad?

*Why should not old men be mad?*

.....

*And when they know what old books tell*

*And that no better can be had,*

*Know why an old man should be mad*