**Nomenclature – communal kitchen to national kitchen**

**The Brave New World of Communal Dining**

‘Probably at some future time it will be difficult to believe that each household in the country did its own separate marketing, buying small amounts of food from retail dealers a hundred per cent above cost price, that every hundred houses in a street had each its own fire for cooking, and that at least a hundred human beings were engaged in serving meals that could have been prepared by half a dozen trained assistants’

This was the verdict of the three individuals tasked by the Ministry of Food to run their first ‘Public Kitchen’.[[1]](#footnote-1) The term itself is significant. The grass-roots origins of ‘communal kitchens’, which inspired ‘public kitchens’ and, in turn, ‘national kitchens’ and ‘national restaurants’ would soon be obscured by their patriotic rebranding.

**Introduction**

In early twenty-first century Britain communal efforts to alleviate food poverty are well documented, with community kitchens and social supermarkets operating alongside hundreds of food banks.[[2]](#footnote-2) These initiatives have their historical precedents.[[3]](#footnote-3) Significantly, communal feeding programmes were a fixture of Britain’s experience of total war in the twentieth century. Between 1940 and 1947 there existed a vast network of state-subsidised ‘national restaurants’. So christened by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who feared that the Ministry of Food’s original moniker - ‘communal feeding centres’ - was ‘redolent of Communism and the workhouse’, there were over 2,000 such national restaurants operating across the country at their peak.[[4]](#footnote-4) Yet the national restaurants of the Second World War did not owe their success exclusively to Churchill’s marketing skills. They were partly inspired by their First World War predecessor: ‘national kitchens’. This article explores the national kitchens of the First World War, an under-documented phenomenon in modern British socio-economic history which existed between 1917 and 1919.

The British government’s introduction of full rationing in 1918 accounts for the relative paucity of the historiography surrounding national kitchens. Historians have pointed to the presence of consultation between organised labour, consumers and government in the implementation and popular acceptance of a comprehensive rationing system which, by the summer of 1918, covered all foodstuffs except bread.[[5]](#footnote-5) Communal, municipal or ‘national’ kitchens are mentioned in passing in works discussing the wartime politics of food, but lack their own history.[[6]](#footnote-6)

When mentioned at all, national kitchens (by contrast to national restaurants) have not been treated kindly by historians. To Margaret Barnett, national kitchens may have been the fruit of a new idealism which took hold in the latter stages of the war, but they failed to move beyond the old soup kitchen model; these remained ‘stolidly lower class institutions located in a dingy back street or public baths and presided over by the familiar Lady Bountiful’. According to Barnett, despite support from Sylvia Pankhurst and Queen Mary, egalitarianism in public dining held no appeal for the British public as the unexotic air of ‘social levelling, communism and fair shares’ hung over the venture.[[7]](#footnote-7) Barnett’s appraisal echoes Churchill’s, but it clashes with the verdict of Derek Oddy, who cites the Food Controller of North West England describing the British working man’s dining tastes: ‘the fried fish shop he knew, the cold supper bar where he could by his tripe of ‘trotters’ he was acquainted with, but a restaurant was not in his line’.[[8]](#footnote-8) The claim here is the opposite – that national kitchens were unappealing to the working man who ate his meals, prepared by his wife, at home and seldom, if ever, dined out.

This article argues instead that the fate of national kitchens had more to do with political will rather than public indifference. By as late as mid-1918 the Ministry of Food was talking confidently of national kitchens becoming a ‘permanent national institution’.[[9]](#footnote-9) National kitchens had, in fact, proved generally popular, especially among lower middle class workers. Their demise, it is argued here, was due to three key political factors: primarily the government’s decision introduce full rationing, but also the vocal opposition to the movement from the catering trade, and the war’s abrupt denouement.

**Communal Kitchens**

Communal kitchens, run by voluntary organisations such as the Salvation Army, had been in operation since the earliest stages of the war in August 1914. These kitchens offering cheap but nutritious food to people caught out by wartime price inflation.[[10]](#footnote-10) The cost of living and instances of food shortage had increased in Britain since July 1914,[[11]](#footnote-11) but for the first two years of war such trends tended to be localised.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In Britain’s big cities voluntary groups such as the Patriotic Food League provided cookery and food economy classes for working class women, either at communal venues or the women’s homes.[[13]](#footnote-13) There were a range of other voluntary initiatives aimed at providing nutritious food to the urban poor during wartime, most prominently London’s ‘invalid kitchens’, which were patronised by the famous humanitarian Muriel Paget.

In May 1917 Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who had formed his ministry in December 1916, appointed millionaire businessman D.A. Thomas (Lord Rhondda) Food Controller. Rhondda, who was to prove popular in his role, was faced with spiralling domestic food prices due to the heightened U-boat campaign of spring 1917. In an attempt to address food shortages and nutritional concerns without resorting to compulsion, Rhondda’s predecessor Devonport had, in early 1917, issued a public appeal for voluntary rationing and introduced ‘meatless days’. There were tens of thousands of voluntary campaigns to save food witnessed across Britain, including novel ideas such as children’s essay competitions and cinema screenings devoted to food economy. Yet these initiatives proved unsuccessful as queues for staples like potatoes and bread soon developed.[[14]](#footnote-14) On taking up his post, Rhondda swiftly responded to rising prices by announcing sugar, and later meat, rationing and issuing a succession of maximum price orders.

The differences in approach between Devonport and Rhondda tend to obscure the fact that the latter still favoured voluntary action when it came to shifts in British dining habits. It was Devonport who introduced the first restrictions on restaurants via the Public Meals Order of 5 December 1916, limiting day meals to two courses and evening meals to three courses.[[15]](#footnote-15) Rhondda followed this with rationing by weight in restaurants in April 1917 and restrictions on the serving of afternoon tea, but favoured local initiative when it came to communal dining.

National kitchens were locally administered yet part of a major nationwide programme to alleviate food poverty and its effects. They grew out of grass-roots projects established within working class communities to combat wartime supply disruption and price inflation. By May 1917, and amidst the food shortages borne of the German U-boat campaign, the Ministry of Food was strongly endorsing voluntary communal kitchens.[[16]](#footnote-16) The Ministry of Food’s Kennedy Jones (a former journalist and Unionist politician who had contested the 1916 Wimbledon election on the radical right wing ticket of the ‘Do-it-now party’)[[17]](#footnote-17) was searching for a tangible example of successful communal dining which could be used as a template by local authorities who might want to take the idea on. Jones commissioned a group of prominent food reformers to open a ‘Kitchen For All’ on London’s Westminster Bridge. This, the first ‘national kitchen’ was opened by Queen Mary on 21 May 1917.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In December 1917, as food queues lengthened, goods such as sugar and butter were placed under local rationing schemes. These ballooned in number until, in July 1918, full rationing was introduced. Rationing was to signal the demise of the national kitchen but by mid-1918 the Ministry of Food was pressing local authorities to establish national kitchens and offering generous financial incentives if they did so. The values of national kitchens were extolled at cinemas in propaganda organised by the Ministry of Food’s Economy section, providing ‘object lessons’ for the public in how to manage want:

Let the films (showing communal dining at national kitchens) be shown in schools and the children teach their parents. Let’s have a body of trained, tactful speakers, quick witted and forceful, to educate the people. “Do it now” should be our motto, for in a short time it may be too late when organised discontent appears.[[19]](#footnote-19)

At peak, there were [insert figure here] national kitchens operating in Britain but within a year the movement had all but disappeared. This article traces the genesis, transformation, management and subsequent disappearance of state-backed communal dining at this time. In providing the first history of this important movement, it explores how ‘community kitchens’ became patriotically rebranded ‘national kitchens’ and accounts for their strange death.

**The Politics of Nomenclature: from ‘Communal’ to ‘National’**

In November 1917 Rhondda appointed a business friend of his, Charles Spencer, to head up the national kitchens division of the Ministry of Food. Spencer, as he put it to Rhondda, was ‘not used to being chained up’. A self-styled man of action who adhered to the ‘do it now’ attitude of Kennedy Jones, he took on the project on the condition that it be ‘untrammelled by red tape’ and run as a ‘business proposition’. Determined to circumvent ‘municipal obstacles’ to the efficient running of national kitchens, Spencer declared himself in favour of employing ‘real hustlers’, if necessary, to make ‘quick work’ of the extensive surveying, building and engineering needed to establish a national network of kitchens. Spencer was all about ‘economy with efficiency’, promising Rhondda that ‘no wasters or inefficients’ would be tolerated, but fired out immediately’. [[20]](#footnote-20)

Spencer’s driven entrepreneurship imbued national kitchens division with a near-evangelical zeal, but was also to attract criticism. His hard-headed business mind, it seems, was responsible for the name change. Spencer confessed to Rhondda that he did ‘not feel quite happy’ with ‘the word communal’. ‘Its association with Socialism is too well known, and I am afraid it is rather a handicap’. He suggested the following alternatives: ‘War Emergency Food Kitchens’; ‘War Food Depots’; ‘War Catering Depots’; ‘National Food Kitchens’; ‘Local Catering Centres’; ‘National Catering Centres’; ‘People’s Food Supply Depots’; ‘Local Food Kitchens’; ‘Food Supply Depots’. From this unwieldy-sounding list, the ‘National Kitchen’ emerged.[[21]](#footnote-21) In a newspaper interview a week later Rhondda confirmed the name change. ‘I do not like the term “communal” Rhondda told the *Manchester Guardian*; ‘I should much rather talk of central or national kitchens’. According to Rhondda, ‘community kitchens’ implied, on the one hand, charity; on the other, communism.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Spencer was worried about the threat of home-grown radicalism. ‘The working classes are near breaking strain’ he wrote Rhondda, a situation which had only materialised since ‘June 1917’. This provided another compelling reason for the name change.

Rhondda announced that he would press for their establishment ‘wherever possible’.[[23]](#footnote-23) Rebranded as ‘National Kitchens’, Rhondda promised that local authorities, in conjunction with local businessmen, could run them as commercial enterprises. They would be subsidised by treasury grants and would bring together all classes. When the first ‘Kitchen for All’ opened on 21 May 1917 the Ministry recruited Queen Mary to help in serving the meals.[[24]](#footnote-24)

The choice of Queen Mary to open the first ‘national kitchen’ was a further move away from the communal origins of the movement. Spencer, in an obsequious despatch to Rhondda, argued that the endorsement of national kitchens by the rich and famous would transform the image of communal dining.

There is no one the working woman looks up to like a Lord. I have found it so in electioneering times. A Lord on a platform will draw more working women to any hall than anyone else. We should have to get noble Lords and Ladies to patronise the communal kitchens and have the fact well press-campaigned.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The Ministry of Food was in favour of communal kitchens for a number of reasons, which it summarised in pamphlet form:

* Food and fuel economy
* Nutritious food at reasonable price
* Skilfully prepared and properly cooked wholesome meals
* Economy of labour by collective preparation of food[[26]](#footnote-26)

National kitchens would combat waste in all its forms: of labour, of material, of health, of energy.[[27]](#footnote-27)

The ‘National Kitchens Order’ of 25 February 1918 instructed local authorities to establish national kitchens ‘as a matter of urgency and as a form of insurance against acute food shortage’. Any new kitchen had to gain the approval of the Ministry of Food, after which it would receive a grant amounting to a quarter of costs, followed – if the kitchen proved viable – by a further quarter of costs.

It was left to the discretion of local authorities as to whether their existing Food Control Committees should run national kitchens in the locale or whether a new local committee should be formed to do so. Public buildings with steam, such as baths, were recommended, but location was left up to local initiative. Similarly, local authorities would decide whether their kitchens would consist of a single central unit or a series of local depots. For every large town or city, Spencer envisaged central kitchens (where cooking would take place) supplying a number of outlying ‘distribution centres’.[[28]](#footnote-28) Soon, however, this model was to evolve into the national restaurant.

**Not a charity**

Spencer’s desire for noble patronage was not shared across the Ministry. The most significant instruction from the Ministry was that national kitchens were ‘not to be conducted as a charity’; they had to function as a business, complete with a full set of accounts.[[29]](#footnote-29) Queen Mary may have opened the first ‘national kitchen’, but under the new scheme ‘Lady Bountiful’ was very much a thing of the past. The Ministry of Food’s National Kitchens handbook warned against any spirit of ‘condescension or patronage’ towards customers.[[30]](#footnote-30) Kitchens would, on the one hand, avoid the taint of charity and, on the other, ‘be conducted without loss to the ratepayer or taxpayer’.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Crucial in differentiating national kitchens from soup kitchens was the need to keep up appearances. The Ministry instructed that each outlet ‘must not resemble a soup kitchen for the poorest sections of society’, but rather a place in which ‘ordinary people in ordinary circumstances’ could purchase an attractive yet cheap meal.[[32]](#footnote-32) Staff had to be well dressed and cooks experienced and the décor could not be chintzy. Gramophones and pianos were recommended to add to the ambience.[[33]](#footnote-33) A report in the *Scarborough Post* on Hull’s central national kitchen encapsulated this:

The Hull people do not go into a back street. They avail of commanding premises in a good and busy thoroughfare, they fit their premises on modern lines, and there is no suspicion of shabby genteelness to be observed. On the contrary, were it not for the artistically painted signs you would never dream it was a National Kitchen. The place has the appearance of being a prosperous confectionary and café business. It is dainty and pleasing to the eye and the goods delivered are in appetising form. The business done is enormous. So far fourteen kitchens have been started in Hull…[[34]](#footnote-34)

Anxious to differentiate national kitchens from soup kitchens, the public kitchens handbook noted the public ‘suspicion’ that soup kitchens only served bean-based dishes and thus advised that in the opening few weeks, to ensure long term popularity, kitchens should ‘bow to prejudice’ by serving established British meat-based dishes. The guidebook criticised the ‘appalling ignorance’ of the British people when it came to preparing attractive food. This situation, which the handbook’s authors termed a ‘national disgrace’, had led to the neglect of many different cuisines, most notably those of the ‘pleasant land of France – the shrine of all true chefs’.[[35]](#footnote-35) But it also struck a patriotic note. Foreign cuisines and the greater use of vegetables should be introduced but only gradually. Gravies should be prepared in the ‘British way’ – from the juices of their own meats – and not, ‘as in many restaurants where foreigners rule’, from a mixed meat gravy.[[36]](#footnote-36)

In a further move away from the charitable aspect, Spencer was determined that employees be paid rather than work voluntary. ‘Anybody’s work is nobody’s work’ he contended, ‘and you cannot dismiss a voluntary worker, you have to appeal to him’; ‘well-meaning amateurs’ would not be entertained.[[37]](#footnote-37) At the flagship ‘Kitchen for All’ a small staff - two cooks, two kitchenmaids, a superintendent and a cashier – was sufficient to cater for between 1,200 to 2,000 people a day.[[38]](#footnote-38) For speed, customers purchased coupons from a cashier upon entering the premises rather than handing over money after eating. Contact with ‘shippers and important dealers in the great markets’ meant that meat was procured at 25% of retail price – savings which were in turn passed on to customers.[[39]](#footnote-39) Most national kitchens opened at lunch and dinner time (from 11.30am to 2pm and between 5pm to 8pm). Fish was the predominant dish for the evening meal. This was the sample lunch menu and price list provided in the official National Kitchens handbook.[[40]](#footnote-40)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sample menu (lunch) |  |
| Item | Price |
| Half a pint of Soup | 1d |
| Joint of meat (with entrees) | 4d (6d) |
| Scones | 0.5d |
| Side Vegetables | 1d |
| Puddings and cakes | 1d |

Voluntary communal kitchens could be established or re-established in the future, said Spencer, but only if subject to local authority supervision. These communal ventures would not be Treasury funded. Spencer had no objection to setting up ‘special’ kitchens to target particular occupational groups such as city clerks, but was opposed to these becoming ‘class kitchens’. ‘Special kitchens’ would also have to be established for areas in which Jews formed a majority of the population, he reasoned, ‘as their mode of living must be considered special’.[[41]](#footnote-41)

**WEC**

Looking out of his office window on London’s Victoria Street in April 1917, J.M. Middleton, secretary of the War Emergency Workers National Committee, reported ‘long queues of women waiting for potatoes’; he also noted that ‘none of the restaurants or hotels in the West End have noted to refuse potatoes to their customers’. The War Emergency Workers National Committee (hereafter WEC) was an umbrella body formed at the outbreak of war to protect workers’ interests; its leader was Sidney Webb and Middleton, its hard-working secretary, was also assistant secretary of the Labour Party. Middleton’s observations omn

Under Rhondda, the WEC hoped to assume a leading consultative role in food policy and lobbied for harsher penalties for food profiteers and a comprehensive rationing system.[[42]](#footnote-42) In a June 1917 meeting with the WEC Rhondda told them that he was ‘in economics an anti-Socialist’ but that ‘under the abnormal conditions of war the principle of individualism must go by the board’.[[43]](#footnote-43) Significantly, in this meeting, communal kitchens were not advocated by the workers’ representatives, although the idea of empowering municipal authorities to administer food services had been on the WEC agenda since the start of the war.[[44]](#footnote-44)

The WEC’s records contain many letters from parish councils and voluntary bodies seeking guidance on how to establish communal kitchens. The WEC regarded community kitchens as its policy, one which the Ministry of Food had now adopted as its own and rebranded accordingly.[[45]](#footnote-45) The Committee had long concentrated on the food trade, pointing to the increase in ship owners’ and farmers’ profits yet the decrease in the purchasing power of the consumer.[[46]](#footnote-46) It boasted that, in its early advocacy of municipal kitchens, the WEC was ‘eighteen months ahead of government policy’.[[47]](#footnote-47)

There were cases where deputations of workers, despairing at high retail prices, successfully lobbied local food control committees to open communal kitchens. Such was the case in Sheffield in January 1918, where the local food control committee resolved to introduce its own communal kitchens and cafes in the absence of national assistance.[[48]](#footnote-48) Theoretically, kitchens could be run independently of the local food control committee. In Liverpool, for example, women workers established their own café, canteen and ‘Rest Room’ serving very cheap meals to female war workers.[[49]](#footnote-49) However, fluctuations in rationing and supplies, accompanied by national orders, meant that – practically speaking - kitchens had to dialogue with food control committees in order to guarantee supplies.[[50]](#footnote-50)

But the ideal model promoted by the WEC was far from communal dining and instead operated on a ticketed take-away basis. Established by the local Borough Council, the Croydon Communal Kitchen was one of the first to be instituted in Britain. It was staffed by a paid cook and a team of voluntary helpers and located on two sites (both kitchens attached to local schools). It opened only at lunchtime (12-2pm). On entering the kitchen in a large queue of people, one was admitted in a group of twelve and was confronted by a ticket distributor, sat at a desk, who handed out tickets for the various food prices (1 pence, 2 pence, 3 pence and 4 pence). One handed over cash in exchange for these tickets and proceeded to the counter where various foodstuffs were arranged separately and by their price.

Although called a ‘communal kitchen’, communal dining did not take place on-site. Significantly, there was a strict rule that no meals could be eaten on the premises. One brought one’s own dish and filled it up with the various foods. These included items such as rice, maize, flour, beans, peas and dried fruit. At Croydon, as in most cases, there was fish on offer but no meat. This was the model originally favoured by Spencer when he was appointed head of the national kitchens division. Customers, he envisaged, would visit central depots, have their thermos flasks filled with food, and return home to consume it.[[51]](#footnote-51)

The Croydon kitchen, like most national kitchens, was subsidised by the local council but it was not a charitable institution; it did not have to turn over a profit but it had to cover its costs and support itself. The average user spent between 6 and 8 pence and the weekly takings were around £40. Customers were not confined to the very poor.[[52]](#footnote-52)

This was out of step with national trends. In towns and cities, national kitchens soon evolved into ‘national restaurants’. The Ministry of Food’s initial policy that no food could be consumed on-site soon gave way to pressure and ‘national kitchens’ evolved seamlessly into ‘national restaurants’, first by adjacent buildings being donated to or acquired by the Ministry to serve as dining rooms, then by design. These were large canteens where one received a ticket upon entering and then exchanged it for cheap meals at the counter. The largest in London (on New Bridge Street) served 2,000 people a day and the biggest in Manchester 3,000.[[53]](#footnote-53) Even villages (of 1,000 people or less) were urged by the Ministry to turn their local kitchen into a village canteen. This could be achieved by converting a local cottage into a dining area. ‘Village canteens’ were also subject to special instructions – soup had to be accompanied by food items which could be easily ‘taken into the field’, for example Cornish pasties.[[54]](#footnote-54)

National kitchens were established at a greater rate after the war than during it.[[55]](#footnote-55)

The Ministry of Food took over kitchens which local food vigilance committees had decided to shut down because they were financially unviable.[[56]](#footnote-56)

National kitchens may have been managed locally but they were subject to direction by the Food Controller and assisted by a Treasury Grant. The Grant initially covered a quarter of costs; a further grant was available once a kitchen had proved its financial viability. Glasgow Corporation set up its first two ‘central kitchens’ (one in Dovehill and one in Kinning Park) after receiving a subsidy of £500 from the Ministry of Food’s Commissioner for the West of Scotland, a sum which the Corporation matched.[[57]](#footnote-57)

As a prelude to full rationing, which came in January 1918, Rhondda introduced flour and potato subsidies and empowered local councils to control food via locally appointed Food Control Committees. Local councils were now able to delegate control of national kitchens to these bodies.[[58]](#footnote-58) While Food Control Committees were mostly composed of trade professionals familiar with food supply and distribution, when it came to questions such as the future location of communal kitchens, the female working class consumer was best placed to advise. Although Food Control Committees were required to contain at least one woman and one representative of labour, it has been claimed that working class women were largely absent.[[59]](#footnote-59) This was not always the case. For example, Glasgow’s Food Control Committee was expanded in September and October 1917 to welcome representatives from the Glasgow Union of Women Workers, the Women’s Labour League, and the Women’s Suffrage Society.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Women typical of those who stood in the escalating food queues of the winter of 1917-1918 were also to be found further towards the grassroots: in local pressure groups such as Food Vigilance Committees.[[61]](#footnote-61)

In the early months there was a good deal of uncertainty over whether or not local authorities were legally entitled to fund these entities.[[62]](#footnote-62) There was also confusion over whether local food committees would have powers to administer compulsory rationing via communal kitchens.[[63]](#footnote-63)

In March 1918 the Ministry of Food issued new guidelines on national kitchens, instructing local authorities to establish national kitchens as a matter of urgency and advising them to open in ‘baths or other public buildings, especially those where steam is available’. The Ministry also recommended that national kitchens incorporate cookery instruction, another departure from the take-away model. National kitchens could only be established, it ordered, in areas where there was sufficient population density and transport facilities. It advised cooperation with Local Education Authority officials responsible for school dinners and insisted on female and labour representation at organisational level.[[64]](#footnote-64)

This move took kitchens out of the hands of voluntary local food committees, tying them up in the purse strings of local government.

School dinners had been provided under the Education (Provision of Meals) Acts 1906. Pointing to the increase in food prices, left wing voices demanded the abolition of means-tested school dinners and the roll-out of a universally accessible national feeding programme in schools.[[65]](#footnote-65) Rhondda, however, did not envisage the extension of national kitchens into schools and pointed to the fall in demand for school dinners since the outbreak of war. This, he argued, was proof that poverty had actually diminished over the course of the war. At the same time, he advised local authorities to monitor closely local food supply and nutritional standards and, if necessary, to avail of national kitchens if a noticeable drop in the ‘health, physique and energy’ of local schoolchildren occurred.[[66]](#footnote-66)

Organisation: St Paul’s churchyard, EC4. Director and assistant director with Assistant Directors for each British county. Each local director is to have a woman inspector ‘to see that the standard of kitchens in his district is well kept up’.

Memorandum on National Kitchens by Marion Phillips. Phillips, the first Australian woman to win a seat in a national parliament, was a member of the Women’s Labour League and the Consumer Council. Phillips, in the words of her fellow Fabian Beatrice Webb, adopted a ‘critical attitude towards all persons and institutions’.[[67]](#footnote-67) But her report, although peppered with criticisms, was pretty supportive of community dining, which she hoped would become a fixture of improved working-class housing estates.

There are national restaurants and national school canteens (unlike the Croydon model). With the introduction of meat rationing, national kitchens encountered problems. With people receiving meat via their ration, it was reported that in several cases recipients refused to give up coupons for the meat on offer and that the department was attempting to arrange a new system whereby certain types of offal would be provided coupon-free. The department was moving towards communal dining rather than the take-away system witnessed in the Croydon example, opening a restaurant in Blackfriars in London. A self-service restaurant with no waitress service. ‘Poor cooking noticeable in some’ kitchens, noted Phillips, but in general operating well. The Poplar kitchen was a notable success, serving up to 2,800 portions in one day. ‘Well arranged, well-lit and beautifully clean’ but situated in one of the public baths so will not last post-war, she estimated.[[68]](#footnote-68) The need for steam (generated from the large boilers found in public bath houses) as a power source for heating food was clearly militating against Ministry advice that kitchens be established in attractive locations rather than back alleys and bath houses.

By April 1918 the secretary of the WEC was reporting that kitchens were ‘quite successful and have become exceedingly popular’. He advised prospective organisers against canvassing public opinion before setting up kitchens because ‘people are very reluctant to say they will use a thing until they see it in existence’. However, the WEC cautioned that ‘the moment for starting them is when there is a scarcity in some particular class of food which the people regard as very important’. The introduction of full rationing provided such a moment, argued the secretary of the WEC, because it had forced people to cook more with vegetables. This meant that ‘a national kitchen should do better than the ordinary private person does’ because vegetable broths and soups were their stock in trade.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The WEC assured the National Kitchens Division of the Ministry of Food that ‘if you can only get the local authorities to move, our local Labour people in the main will be only too glad to assist’.[[70]](#footnote-70)

**Glasgow Corporation Report on National Kitchens in London and Other Towns**

Birmingham: one central kitchen and seven distributing depots (supplied from the central kitchen). Only one of these seven offered dining-in (for 72 people) elsewhere you have to bring your bucket.

Hammersmith: 50,000 portions a day.

**National Kitchens become National Restaurants: resistance from the Trade**

Slowly, the model of taking one’s vessel to be filled up and returning home to consume the food was replaced by the national restaurant. The Ministry’s model kitchen at Poplar had a restaurant attached from its inception in 1917 and by 1918 peak was feeding 2,500 people a day.

In August 1918 Glasgow Corporation’s Special Committee on National Kitchens was approached by a six-man deputation from the Glasgow District Restaurateurs’ and Hotel Keepers’ Association. The restaurateurs had gotten wind that the corporation was to buy a large restaurant in the city centre and run it as a national restaurant. This central location, they claimed, would be hugely detrimental to the restaurant trade in the city.

After discussion with the National Kitchens Division of the Ministry of Food in London, it was agreed that four national restaurants were to open in Glasgow, located in the Parkhead, Kinning Park, Springburn and Anderston districts. Locating restaurants in outlying urban areas was less controversial than placing them centrally, where they would be in competition with private enterprise. What annoyed the Glasgow restaurateurs was that the last of these locations, Anderston, was indeed in the city centre. A national restaurant would operate on the bustling Argyle Road; the Committee also revealed that it would open a training school for kitchen staff in the centre of the city.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The restaurateurs’ delegation was not pleased at this threat to private catering in the city. Other owners of private enterprise, however, saw opportunity. Soon, private businesses were scrapping with one another in an effort to win contracts with the new national restaurants. Several Glasgow property owners approached the committee with rental offers for their premises. An iron works offered to rent their derelict canteen building to the Corporation at a preferential rate and local ironmongers guaranteed a good quote on any kitchen equipment needed.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Nonetheless, the resistance to national restaurants from the catering trade recurred throughout the country. This was not a matter of them profiteering at a time of scarcity, maintained restaurant owners; rather, the very principle of state-subsidised restaurants was wrong since it offended that quintessential British value - the notion of ‘fair play’. A letter to the Ministry from London caterer John Pearce claimed that national restaurants, thanks to ‘preferential treatment’ from the state, had simply failed to ‘play the game’. Writing in late 1918, he claimed that Charles Spencer and the Ministry of Food could have fulfilled their duty by establishing national restaurants during dock strikes and hunger marches, but had preferred to concentrate on competing with private retailers.

Spencer, for his part, did not see communal dining as a threat to private restaurants, insisting that they could co-exist and even buy cooperatively in order to pass on savings to customers and reduce waste.[[73]](#footnote-73) It was not an argument which held weight with Pearce and his ilk. Whereas he and other private retailers had ‘done their bit’ by providing hampers of food to the families of ‘exasperated, hungry men’, thus preventing a ‘good deal of trouble’, Spencer had avoided addressing the ‘real need’. And whereas he had ‘four sons and a grandson fighting for King and country’ Spencer ‘apparently a young, strong man’ with ‘no knowledge of catering whatever’ had enjoyed lavish state support and press backing for his advocacy of communal dining. Spencer had benefited personally from all this, claimed Pearce, since the publicity surrounding national kitchens ‘must have been worth thousands of pounds to him as an advertisement’. Spencer, according to this critic, was not only shirking his war duty, the Halifax-based politician was also using his directorship of national kitchens for personal gain. [[74]](#footnote-74)

**Social reformers**

Maud Pember Reeves, Constance Peel, Kate Manley were recruited by the Ministry of Food to head a Women’s Department, which became the National Kitchens Division. Reeves was, like Marion Phillips, an antipodean suffragist and Fabian socialist, who in 1913 published *Round about a pound a week*, an influential survey of poverty in Lambeth. In explaining infant mortality and childhood malnutrition, it pointed to the structural causes of poverty rather than maternal negligence.[[75]](#footnote-75) Her co-director Peel was familiar to the fashionable classes as editor of *The Queen*, a regular contributor to *The Lady* and, from 1918, editor of the women's page in *The Daily Mail*. Manley was an inspector of domestic subjects for the Board of Education.[[76]](#footnote-76) Since Reeves’ 1913 report had called for free school meals, Manley provided an important link between social reformers like Reeves and Peel and the educational authorities.

Reeves’ role was interrupted by the bereavement of her son in June 1917 but Peel travelled nationwide, delivering almost two hundred addresses promoting the economical use of food.[[77]](#footnote-77)

In planning its provision of kitchens, Glasgow Corporation’s Special Committee on Food Supply and Distribution sought advice from the city’s Women’s Legion, which was operating a popular communal kitchen at a school building in the city centre. Food shortages were acute in the poorer areas of Glasgow and, three months earlier, a crowd of two-thousand people had marched on the City Chambers, protesting against the holding back of supplies, particularly potatoes.[[78]](#footnote-78) Praising the work of the Women’s Legion, the committee recommended that the Corporation open its own ‘food kitchens’.[[79]](#footnote-79) Note, once again, the aversion to the term ‘communal’.

**Food reformers: Nutritional Science and Egalitarian Eating**

A recent study has summarised the main change in diets that occurred during the war as a ‘reduction in sugar, cheese, butter, butcher's meat, and fruit and vegetables consumption, and the increased volume of bacon, sausages, and margarine’. This resulted in an overall reduction in vitamins A and B12 for skilled and unskilled workers and reductions in vitamins C, D, and riboflavin for skilled workers.[[80]](#footnote-80)

The Public Kitchens handbook was a collaborative effort between three Edwardian food reformers. Both R. Hippisley Cox and H.J. Bradley were recruited to the project by a leading figure in the Ministry of Food, the former politician and journalist Kennedy Jones. Eustace Miles, the most famous of this triumvirate, was a vegetarian who ran a health-food shop and restaurant in Charing Cross, London. A keen sportsman (he was three-times the amateur real tennis world champion), writing pamphlets was a regular activity for him. A favourite theme was how the meaty, heavy Edwardian diet was deleterious to health and explained various health problems, from nervousness to poor physical fitness and mental problems.[[81]](#footnote-81)

handbook expressly warned against peeling and boiling vegetables. ‘The peel, tops and outside leaves contain valuable salts which are lost when poured down the sink and boiling alters the composition of the salts’.[[82]](#footnote-82) Instead recommended simmering, stewing, frying or braising vegetables. Would ‘avoid the tendency of all large kitchens to provide “factory food” and would instead be ‘centres of civilisation’ fostering the ‘art and skill’ of good food rather than its ‘manufacture’.[[83]](#footnote-83) It instructed that ‘odds and ends must be used’ – peelings, stalks, outside leaves and tops of vegetables, to say nothing of bone and gristle’.[[84]](#footnote-84) Gas was favoured for cooking since electricity because ‘few persons familiar with its use were available’ and the price too high; latest technology such as roasting ovens, steamers and water jackets for the large boiling pots.

Although the handbook was co-written by the committed vegetarian Eustace Miles, it devoted considerable time to explaining how to ensure meat was cooked attractively. Even cheap cuts of meat should not be merely boiled ‘for there is an unexplained repugnance to a grey hash’. Instead, all meats should be ‘lightly fried, then cooked slowly with a little stock and vegetables’. Deep frying was recommended as the most economical means of cooking meat.[[85]](#footnote-85)

The final draft of the Ministry’s official National Kitchens handbook was edited heavily. Favourable social consequences anticipated by food reformers like Miles as a corollary of the movement, such as communal dining acting to quell popular demand for alcohol, did not make it into the final draft.[[86]](#footnote-86) Flavour stimulates the digestive fluids and helps to extract the full food value, while ‘dull cooking’ leaves the digestive fluids ‘inert’.[[87]](#footnote-87)

In April 1918 the Ministry of Food took over the restaurant and training kitchens of London’s National Training School of Cookery. Under this arrangement, the equipment required for national kitchens became part of the school’s training programme. The Ministry hoped that availing of the ‘really first class cooking’ of the training school would reinforce the point that national kitchens were not merely cheap and cheerful.[[88]](#footnote-88)

Elizabeth Waldie, head-teacher at the Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science, the largest of the three great Scottish cookery training schools, published her best-selling ‘Economical Recipes suitable for War Cookery’ in 1917. Cooking must respond to ‘the greatest struggle of nations the world has ever known’ by supplying energy for war work and achieving fuel economy, she wrote. Waldie broke wartime nutrition into four food groups. ‘Flesh Formers’ – scarce sources of protein such as meat, eggs and milk – which could be replaced by cheaper meats, nuts, beans and dried fruit. ‘Heat and Energy Producers’ - fats which were in short supply – could also be obtained from suet, nuts, seeds and fish. For ‘Sugars and Starches’ Waldie recommended replacing jam with syrup and treacle. ‘Blood Purifiers and Bone Formers’ - to be found in mineral salts and vegetable acids – were now largely to be gotten from green vegetables, she instructed. Waldie’s book of ‘War Cookery’ provided a number of substitute recipes. These included ‘Poor Man’s Goose’ (made from pig liver); ‘Brains on Toast’ (made from sheep’s brains); and ‘Very Economical Plum Pudding’.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Reacting to food supply difficulties, domestic scientists issued advice informed by contemporary beliefs. The conference of teachers of domestic science produced a pamphlet in May 1917 which not only contained the blunt instruction that people must ‘eat less food’ but also advocated Fletcherising. ‘Well masticated, or in other words, well chewed food, yields more nourishment to the body than food which is eaten quickly and is not properly chewed’.[[90]](#footnote-90)

Cookery schools like Glasgow’s were increasingly forced to adapt to the wartime ethic of egalitarian eating in instruction as well as recommendation. Glasgow’s College of Domestic Science had to drop its Special Certificate in High Class Cookery in December 1915 and even considered suspending their basic diploma in cookery in favour of a new course – ‘War Cookery’ – since instruction in techniques such as pastry making involved an unacceptable amount of food waste.[[91]](#footnote-91) The college’s entire syllabus was redesigned in the summer of 1917 in order to ensure that every course adhered to the imperative of cookery instruction ‘of the greatest nutritive value at the least possible cost’ and, as part of the national Food Economy Campaign, the college offered free cookery courses to large audiences on topics such as ‘meatless cooking’.[[92]](#footnote-92)

The prospect of national kitchens was, on the whole, viewed coolly by domestic science colleges. Whereas the Edinburgh School of Cookery resolved, in April 1917, resolved to establish ‘one or more communal kitchens’ resembling the Salvation Army’s canteen in the city as part of the broad food economy campaign, the Glasgow school worried that the autonomy of cookery training schools was threatened by the emergence of national kitchens[[93]](#footnote-93). The Glasgow school had already given over much of its premises to the Red Cross and, fearing for its future, wished to remain distinct from the new national kitchens and restaurants. The Liverpool school sent a board member to inspect London’s national kitchens; after hearing her report the board agonised over the ‘very great expenses’ for ‘equipment and upkeep’ and hoped they would not end up footing any of the bill.[[94]](#footnote-94)

In March 1918, however, Glasgow’s Food Control Committee threatened to substantially reduce the amount of meat allocated to the college, citing public demand.[[95]](#footnote-95) This trend was mirrored up and down the country, with the Ministry of Food on the one hand keen to recruit the principals of domestic science colleges onto consultative committees but, on the other, increasingly reluctant to release food to their institutions for educational purposes.[[96]](#footnote-96)

The movement towards a more communal political economy of food was further underlined when, in May 1918, cookery colleges received instruction from Charles Spencer, the Director of National Kitchens, that all new national kitchens ‘in large populations centres’ were to be located near to cookery training schools. Training schools were to educate future national kitchen staff. In assisting the formation of national kitchens, college principals were instructed to liaise with their local education authority and food control committee.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Steadily, the Glasgow college’s leading teachers were poached by the Ministry of Food, which bettered the salaries of the best teachers if they agreed to leave their posts to become national kitchen supervisors.[[98]](#footnote-98) In May 1918 the school’s war cookery guru herself, Elizabeth Waldie, was headhunted by the Ministry and made supervisor for national kitchens in the south-west of Scotland.[[99]](#footnote-99)

But with the end of the war and Charles Spencer’s departure from his post, the Ministry of Food’s changed tack. To save money, national kitchen supervisors were no longer to be trained by the leading British domestic science colleges but were to receive their entire training at National kitchens headquarters in London.[[100]](#footnote-100) Elizabeth Waldie, who had been so enthusiastic about taking up her post as supervisor of national kitchens that she had turned down at the eleventh hour a substantial pay rise from her former employers in favour of the job, left her post shortly thereafter, taking up a job as inspectress of the Scottish Education Department.[[101]](#footnote-101)

Liverpool’s school of domestic science did its bit by publishing leaflets on wartime cookery and running cookery classes for widows and even carrying out experiments (at the behest of the Ministry of Food) into ‘fatless dishes’ and other nutritional innovations.[[102]](#footnote-102)

**Meals on Wheels**

A novel form of national kitchen was the ‘travelling kitchen’: a tramcar fitted with ovens and powered by overhead electricity wires that ‘not only distributes the cheapest of cheap dinners but cooks them on the way’ as the *Yorkshire Post* put it. The tram-based travelling kitchen was the brainchild of the Director of National Kitchens, Charles Spencer, who was also chairman of the Halifax Tramways Committee. Appointed Director of the national scheme in November 1917, Spencer was a technocratic Yorkshireman who stayed in post until January 1919, when he resigned citing the time demands of his many other business interests.[[103]](#footnote-103)

Trams had been used in the food economy campaign before, flying flags bearing the words ‘don’t Waste Bread’, for example.[[104]](#footnote-104) Mobile canteens, however, were a new phenomenon. On its maiden voyage, Halifax’s inaugural ‘perambulating electric kitchen’ was met by an enthusiastic crowd ‘armed with dishes, jugs, basins, or other domestic receptacles’, a hungry mob which had to be ordered into queues by police. One elderly recipient, interviewed by the newspaper, gave the scheme her seal of approval by declaring it ‘just champion’.[[105]](#footnote-105) The *Electrical Times* approved as well. It had seen the future of British dining and it came in the shape of the perambulating electric kitchen. These tramcars were of ‘permanent value, especially in industrial districts’ and would soon replace ‘individualistic methods’ of cooking and eating.[[106]](#footnote-106)

Travelling kitchens also came in the form of motorcars. These were driven by members of the Women’s Reserve Ambulance and financed by the Ministry of Food. They carried demonstrators (teachers from domestic science colleges), the materials needed for cookery demonstrations, and publicity advocating frugal consumption. The travelling kitchen functioned as a mobile ‘agitprop’ which pulled up at halls and other public venues, where its driver and passengers would show the assembled crowd how to run a ‘business-like’ kitchen. Usually attended by housewives, these demonstrations emphasised speed and economy. The travelling kitchen cut down on waste by only cooking and serving with ‘indispensable articles’. When the show was over, and usually while receiving the vote of thanks from the local mayor, the demonstrators would make a point of washing up all their pots, pans and utensils and repacking them into the car. Food economy would trump ceremony. The demonstrations took place in London boroughs, where the travelling kitchen team was usually welcomed by the mayor before cooking for a large local audience who would then consume the meals at cost-price. Enthusiasm and demand for such demonstrations, according to the Ministry, was always high.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Spencer envisaged the future conveyance of food via motor cars. To cope with the problem of keeping the food hot when the end destination far from the centre, he had designed a ‘special water-jacketed carrier’ – in the course of manufacture.[[108]](#footnote-108) He was also working on ‘a rail-less car with electrical apparatus’ which would convey food.[[109]](#footnote-109) The Ministry of Food, in general, took a cooler attitude towards meals on wheels, looking askance at private businesses transporting food via motor cars as this might aggravate fuel shortages. The Ministry recommended the use of ‘motors’, where available, in overcoming the difficulties of delivering cheap wholesale supplies to outlying villages.[[110]](#footnote-110) But Spencer’s suggestion that all new national kitchens be situated on a tramway route ‘where a siding could be put in’ was not implemented.[[111]](#footnote-111)

**The primacy of the local**

The success of community kitchens, or ‘national kitchens’, depended on local political backing. Speaking in May 1917 the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Max Muspratt, a Liberal politician, urged limitations on the spread of the community kitchen. It should only provide supplementary foods such as porridge and soups and should not, he instructed, displace the housewife.[[112]](#footnote-112) Although the city’s local education committee provided food and cookery lessons for schoolchildren and parents, until 1918 Liverpool was distinguished among large English cities in having only one municipal communal kitchen, described in the local press as an ‘unqualified success’.[[113]](#footnote-113) This lack of kitchens can be traced back to Muspratt, who also served on the city’s food control committee and was a consistent opponent of any measure which went further than the voluntary curtailment of consumption.

**1918 spencer memo**

In October 1918 Spencer penned a long memorandum on the future of national kitchens.

National kitchens could not be left to local authorities to manage because wartime had meant the negligence of local priorities like roads. Post-war ‘reconstruction’ would mean that all available expenditure would be on infrastructural projects and national kitchens would be neglected. But look at all the workers used to canteen food who now are being laid off and need similarly cheap food – this is where national kitchens could persist. Spencer envisaged national kitchens persisting as centrally funded institutions which could work with the private retail trade in wholesale purchase and distribution, thus driving down costs to the consumer. With the exception of financial assistance from the state, Spencer’s vision – with its advocacy of large units to achieve economies of scale - bares some resemblance to the supermarket system today. Spencer also envisaged national kitchens enduring through the taking over of coffee houses in large towns and cities; a further recommendation was that a national kitchen be part of post-war housing projects in every local authority area.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Spencer, who was later to be accused of profligate spending by his successor in post, Kennedy Jones, pointed to the almost £3,000 profit that the New Bridge restaurant had turned over in half a year.[[115]](#footnote-115)

**1919**

Despite continued protests from restaurateurs and other private caterers at the expansion of national restaurants, meeting in January 1919 the Ministry’s kitchens advisory committee was discussing the possibility of running the capital’s numerous civil service canteens.[[116]](#footnote-116)

But with the post-war winding down of the Ministry of Food, the forward march was halted. Before stepping down as Director at the turn of the year, a downbeat Charles Spencer recommended a thorough slimming down of national kitchens. Divisional directors were to be removed as well as the team of thirty engineers and architects responsible for the planning of new kitchens. A skeleton board of management would remain as well as a pared down central staff. ‘The National Restaurant’, declared Spencer, ‘was a war measure and could now be closed down with profit and credit to all concerned’. His idea of cooperation with the private retail trade to achieve cost savings, drive down retail prices, and eliminate waste had now been jettisoned. To keep going would ‘merely set up national competition with the restaurant trade without any direct advantage to the state’.[[117]](#footnote-117) It seems that Spencer had, by this point, accepted the criticisms of the catering trade: national restaurants were an affront to British values of fair play and should be wound down.

With the lease on the flagship national restaurant at London’s New Bridge Street set to expire in May 1919, the kitchens advisory committee declared that its closure would be ‘disastrous’ and the ‘moral effect’ of closure ‘very bad’.[[118]](#footnote-118) But the Ministry was busy selling on its national restaurants elsewhere, relinquishing control of national kitchens at sites like the Southampton docks while it wrangled over a price for New Bridge Street restaurant with the private food retailers Spiers and Ponds.[[119]](#footnote-119) Councils were obliged to inform the Ministry of plans for the closure of locally run kitchens. The committee frequently protested against the closure of local premises, citing social need, but could not force borough or district councils to keep their kitchens open.[[120]](#footnote-120) Council-run kitchens in Marylebone and Hammersmith received eleventh hour financial support from the Ministry but, continuing to make a loss, shut their doors.[[121]](#footnote-121)

And yet amid the closures there were still new kitchens opening, demonstrating that there was still demand for the service they provided in urban centres. Resisting winding down, staff at the National Kitchens Division produced a bullish internal newsletter boasting of the continued success of the ‘NK movement’. Cheltenham, it reported, had opened a brand new Central Kitchen in late January 1919, serving a range of mouth-watering foodstuffs from roast beef to apple puffs. The cornish pasties and shepherd’s pie on offer at Sunderland’s new kitchen were, according to the newsletter, second to none. Newcastle had finally got its kitchen in April 1919[[122]](#footnote-122) and, while Liverpool was shutting its kitchens, new ones were opening up across the Mersey in Birkenhead. The newsletter mocked those who claimed that national kitchens were no longer needed, rubbishing a Scottish provost for claiming that British people were now well paid and well fed and condemning one local authority for closing its kitchen because of the expense of hiring waitresses and table cloths. A thinly veiled contempt for the bourgeois character of the post-war world is clearly perceptible.[[123]](#footnote-123)

National kitchens may have been declining in Britain, but the newsletter breathlessly reported the growth of communal dining abroad. Since War Office reports concentrated on activities in former enemy nations, news of communal dining ventures in cities like Vienna and Hamburg were marshalled by the newsletter’s civil servant authors as evidence of the ‘enormous public demand’ for cheap dining and disdain for ‘overcharging’ across Europe. The ‘movement’ had even spread to the United States, according to the newsletter, where the school of medicine at Yale University had requested a copy of the British ‘NK handbook’.[[124]](#footnote-124)

Communal kitchens helped eliminate profiteering. Since ‘good food is the foundation of good health, the state wants to see that good food is procured by everybody’. ‘There are no rich people any more, we are all poor’.[[125]](#footnote-125) Propaganda would encourage local authorities to set them up in school canteens and large firms to provide canteens at their ‘factories, works, docks, mines etc’. the scheme would even extend to distributing kitchens as part of any new housing schemes – recommend that all new local authority flats come with a ‘common kitchen’. Essential for public health. Envisage ‘competition with’ not ‘sweep out of existence’ caterers – insists that this trade opposition ‘pales into insignificance’ compared to public demand for cheap, nutritious food. Cited a commons question where it suggested that 90% ran at a loss by saying that where ‘suitable surroundings and efficient management’ always profitable.[[126]](#footnote-126) Since national kitchens were an emergency measure they were at time hurriedly and extravagantly equipped. When min of food comes to an end the national kitchens would transfer to the ministry of health. At present, any local authority looking to set up a ‘National Restaurant’ or ‘Industrial Canteen’ (NOTE TERMINOLOGY) would be advanced full capital expenditure for ten years free of interest!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!![[127]](#footnote-127) ‘immense possibilities’ in the NK movement and it should be included in ‘reconstruction policy’ – cites school canteens in Ipswich complete with allotments – boys and girls get experience in gardening and cookery.

Yet central support was receding rapidly and more sites were closing than opening. At the signing of the armistice in September 1918 there were 363 national kitchens in Britain; six months later there were 120 less.[[128]](#footnote-128)

Meanwhile, the national kitchens division was doing handsomely from its running of refreshments in royal parks, reporting that £700 had been taken from four sites during the Easter holidays in 1919. The committee urged that ‘arrangements for poor children’ be made through a special discount children’s lunch.[[129]](#footnote-129)

By 1919 the National Kitchens Division had taken over catering in royal parks: a further sign of the kitchens’ journey from popular and cheap communal ventures to established institutions. Sure enough, the catering units in royal parks like Hyde Park which the National Kitchens Division took on, were soon charging more than restaurants at the cheaper end of the scale like Lyons’.

Kennedy Jones, Spencer’s successor as director of national kitchens, claimed that catering in royal parks had provided food at ‘reasonable prices’.[[130]](#footnote-130) However the committee’s Maud Pember-Reeves complained that prices were ‘excessive’ at the park outlets and that they were unable to service large numbers of people.[[131]](#footnote-131) Certainly, the sites at Kensington Gardens, Kew Gardens, Hyde Park, Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill had turned over a substantial revenue of £4,000 in three months.[[132]](#footnote-132)

But for all the committee’s social concern, it was quite clear to all concerned that national kitchens were morphing into something quite distinct from their original purpose. By late 1919, Kennedy Jones’s national kitchens division was putting its facilities to use in feeding hot cooked food to the thousands of police and lorry drivers called into London to take up the transport duties of striking railway workers in late 1918.[[133]](#footnote-133)

**Conclusion**

National kitchens were part of an increasingly intensive statist management of domestic affairs from late 1916 onwards.[[134]](#footnote-134) With the state moving towards ever greater control of food pricing and distribution, communal feeding initiatives were swallowed up and regurgitated as national kitchens, in the process becoming part of the state apparatus. By mid-1918 the Ministry of Food was talking confidently of national kitchens becoming a ‘permanent national institution’;[[135]](#footnote-135) they might be but little more than a year later, their days were numbered. Spencer claimed that he had transformed a loose network of ‘scrappy’, ‘back street’ kitchens into a national movement.[[136]](#footnote-136) His successor, Kennedy Jones, didn’t see it that way and accused him of presiding over a division which kept incomplete financial records, was poorly organised, and spent profligately in a vain attempt to get local authorities behind the scheme.[[137]](#footnote-137)

The post-war winding down of the Ministry of Food did not necessarily sound the death knell for national kitchens, insisted Charles McCurdy, Liberal MP and the department’s parliamentary secretary. It was possible for the state to provide heap, hearty meals for the labouring masses in place of the ‘sloppy tea and teacake’ which was all that could be had for the same price before the experiment in egalitarian eating. Moreover, national kitchens were turning over a net profit for the state averaging between £75 and £100 a week by April 1919.[[138]](#footnote-138)

Karen Hunt has written of how ‘consumer’ activism during the First World War was telling of a shift in the politics of food, one which jettisoned the conservative and gender-specific terminology of ‘housewife’ yet, in doing so, simultaneously obscured the role of the ordinary housewife beneath a gender-neutral terminology.[[139]](#footnote-139)

A similar change in nomenclature took place in the Second World War when 'Community Feeding Centres' were rebranded ‘British Restaurants’ by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. This rebranding is said to have worked, with 2,145 British Restaurants functioning across Britain at their peak in November 1943.[[140]](#footnote-140) So why did it not work in the First World War?

According to Spencer, national kitchens had suffered from deeper seated class and geographical divides. He noted that, for all the Ministry’s efforts, some members of the working class still viewed national kitchens as soup kitchens and that they were more popular with the middle class. They had also proven most popular in London and the south east where people were more inclined to dine out. This contrasted with the north of England, where the working class man generally travelled home for dinner in the middle of the day. However he maintained that this was changing, with northern workers increasingly inclined to eat at canteens close to work.[[141]](#footnote-141)

Another reason for decline was the stout opposition of the catering trade, who rejected any post-war moves towards cooperative purchasing and selling which would deliver efficiency and eliminate waste. The Ministry held a meeting shortly after the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 at which it proposed the establishment of public-private buying organisations for the collective purchase of foodstuff and the cooperative use of cooking equipment between national kitchens/restaurants and private ventures. The caterers’ trade association voted against the scheme on further meetings on 17 and 19 December 1919 ‘by very large majority’.[[142]](#footnote-142)

It was rationing which killed national kitchens. The introduction of full rationing in 1918 guaranteed fair shares on an individual basis; this, in turn, dampened the appeal and the demand for cheap *communal* dining. Spencer rightly viewed full rationing as a threat to communal kitchens and insisted that further-reaching state controls on the price and distribution of food should not replace communal dining. Writing to Rhondda on the cusp of the introduction of full rationing in January 1918 he recommended ‘taking over the House of Commons and House of Lords kitchens’ and running them as communal kitchens. ‘The effect on the country would be electrical, and it would be a real answer to the House demands for rationing’.[[143]](#footnote-143)

Just weeks later, however, full rationing was imposed and set about eclipsing communal dining. Despite the continuation of prosecutions for violation of food control regulations after the war’s end, by December 1918 Britons were enjoying sugar-coated cakes and double meat rations. The gradual lifting of rationing restrictions, so soon after their implementation, had a similar effect in making communal dining seem less attractive. In January 1918, Spencer could write to Rhondda telling him that compulsion in food supply as a ‘remedy’ was ‘worse than the disease’ and that he could not conceive of ‘any organisation which could feed the whole of the country without hopeless confusion’.[[144]](#footnote-144) A month later, however, such a system was in place and beginning to function successfully.

It was, then, a issue of political will rather than public indifference.

1. R. Hippisley Cox, H.J. Bradley, Eustace Miles, *Public Kitchens: their Organisation and Importance* (London, 1917), NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom, *Feeding Britain: A strategy for zero hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland* (London, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Peter J. Atkins, ‘Communal Feeding in War Time: British Restaurants 1940-47’, in Alain Drouard, Rachel Duffett and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska eds., Food and war in Twentieth Century Europe (Farnham, 2011), 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Karen Hunt’s ‘The Politics of Food and Women’s Neighborhood Activism in First World War Britain’, [*International Labor and Working-Class History*](http://journals.cambridge.org.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdftype=1&fid=7436364&jid=ILW&volumeId=77&issueId=01&aid=7436356), 77/01 (2010), briefly discusses communal kitchens through the prism of gender-based activism. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Barnett, *British Food Policy*, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Derek Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food: British Diet from the 1890s to the 1990s* (Gateshead, 2003), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Departmental Committee meeting on village canteens, 11 April 1918. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. L. Margaret Barnett, *British Food Policy during the First World War* (London, 1985), 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell, ‘The First World War and working-class food consumption in Britain’, *European Review of Economic History*, 17/1 (2013), 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008), 192-198. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Minutes of the Committee on Cookery, 22 March 1917, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London, 1991), 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Marwick, *The Deluge*, 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. J.S. Middleton to Lord Rhondda, 15 June 1917. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/2:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Dilwyn Porter, ‘Jones, (William) Kennedy (1865–1921)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. R. Hippisley Cox, H.J. Bradley, Eustace Miles, Public Kitchens: their Organisation and Importance, 3 (London, 1917), NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The Manchester Guardian, 27 January 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. J.S. Middleton to J. Moore, 31 July 1917. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *The Times*, 22 May 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ministry of Food, National Kitchens Order, March 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/4/31 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. National Kitchens Order, 1918. NA, MAF 60/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. National Kitchens Handbook, 17, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Public kitchens, 14 NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. National Kitchens Handbook, 17, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Public kitchens, 15 NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Public kitchens, 15 NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Public kitchens, 3 NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Public kitchens, 13 NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. National Kitchens Handbook, 23, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Yorkshire Post, 23 June 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Manchester Guardian, 22 June 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Oldham Trade Council, Mass Meeting on National Food Supply, 1 May 1917. PHMA, WNC 9/3/15/22 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. J.S. Middleton to E. Faulkner, 22 April 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/11 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. J.S. Middleton to J.P. Riding, 19 January 1916. PHMA, WNC 9/2/8 i [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. J.S. Middleton to C.F. Spencer, 2 May 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/2/7 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. The Manchester Guardian, 17 January 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, 30 June 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. National Kitchens Handbook, 23, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. WNC report on communal kitchens, undated. PHMA, WNC 14/4/3/1:iii [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The Manchester Guardian, 10 September 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. National Kitchens Handbook, 31, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. The Manchester Guardian, 4 January 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The Manchester Guardian, 9 May 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Mitchell Library, Glasgow Corporation Minutes, Minutes of Committee on Food Control, 21 February 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Local Authorities Food Control Order (no. 2), 25 February 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/4/1i [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Karen Hunt, ‘The Politics of Food and Women’s Neighborhood Activism in First World War Britain’, [*International Labor and Working-Class History*](http://journals.cambridge.org.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdftype=1&fid=7436364&jid=ILW&volumeId=77&issueId=01&aid=7436356), 77/01, March 2010, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Mitchell Library, Glasgow Corporation Minutes, Minutes of Committee on Food Control, 4 September 1917 and 26 October 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Hunt, ‘The Politics of Food’, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. J.S. Middleton to Lord Rhondda, 15 June 1917. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/2:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. J. Downie to Middleton, 19 November 1917. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/6: 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ministry of Food, National Kitchens Order, March 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/4/3ii [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Workers’ National Committee memorandum on Feeding School children (undated), PHMA, WNC 9/2/69 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Board of Education, National Kitchens and the Provision of Meals for School Children, 11 March 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/4/6i [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Brian Harrison, ‘Phillips, Marion (1881–1932)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Marion Phillips, Undated Memorandum on National Kitchens, PHMA, WNC 14/4/3/1 i [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Middleton to E.R. Simmons, 15 April 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/1/9 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. J.S. Middleton to C.F. Spencer, 2 May 1918. PHMA, WNC 14/4/2/7 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Mitchell Library, Glasgow Corporation Minutes, Minutes of Special Committee on National Kitchens Order 1918, 23 August 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Mitchell Library, Glasgow Corporation Minutes, Minutes of Special Committee on National Kitchens Order 1918, 23 August 1918. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. John Pearce, ‘Be British – Play the Game’, NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Maud Pember Reeves, *Round about a pound a week* (London, 1913) [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. C. S. Peel, *Life's enchanted cup: an autobiography, 1872–1933* (1933), 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Karen Hunt, ‘The Politics of Food’, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Mitchell Library, Glasgow Corporation Minutes, Minutes of the Special Committee on Food Supply and Distribution, 15 June 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Gazeley and Newell, ‘The First World War and working-class food consumption in Britain’, European Review of Economic History, 17/1 (2013), 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Brigid Allen, ‘Miles, Eustace Hamilton (1868–1948)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Public kitchens handbook, 15. NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Public kitchens handbook, 4. NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Public kitchens handbook, 19. NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. R. Hippisley Cox, H.J. Bradley, Eustace Miles, Public Kitchens: their Organisation and Importance, 18 (London, 1917), NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. National Kitchens Handbook, 14, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. National Kitchens Handbook, 27, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Minutes of departmental committee meeting, 11 April 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Elizabeth Waldie, ‘Collection of Economical Recipes suitable for War Cookery’ (Glasgow, 1917). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Conference of Teachers of Domestic Science pamp [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Minutes of the Committee on Cookery, 17 May 1917, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Glasgow Herald, 16 October 1915. See also J. Struthers to J.A. McCallum, 9 June 1917, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Chalmers Wilson, memorandum on food economy campaign (Scotland), 6 April 1917, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Liverpool training school of cookery minutes, May 1918. John Moores University Archives, F.L. Calder collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Minutes of meeting of Governors, 27 March 1918, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Liverpool training school of cookery minutes, November 1917. John Moores University Archives, F.L. Calder collection; notes of the Deputation of Principals of Training Schools to the Ministry of Food, 6 March 1918. Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Liverpool training school of cookery minutes, May 1918. John Moores University Archives, F.L. Calder collection [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Minutes of the Committee on Cookery, 14 June 1918, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Glasgow Evening News, 15 April 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Educational Methods Committees, 14 June 1918, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science records, Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Glasgow Evening News, 25 April 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Liverpool training school of cookery minutes, April-November 1917. John Moores University Archives, F.L. Calder collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. The Manchester Guardian, 9 February 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, 22 June 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Yorkshire Post, 26 April 1914. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Electrical Times, 25 April 1918 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Ministry of Food, ‘How to Work a Travelling Kitchen’, NA, MAF 60/312. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. National Kitchens Handbook, 31, NA, MAF 60/311. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, 4 May 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, 18 August 1917; 9 October 1917. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 19 February 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 17 December 1918. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 26 February 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 3 March 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 12 March 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 29 March 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 3 April 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. National Kitchens Division weekly news service, 25 January 1919, NA, MAF 60/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. National Kitchens Division weekly news service, 25 January 1919, NA, MAF 60/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Ministry of Food, ‘How to Work a Travelling Kitchen’, NA, MAF 60/312. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Untitled memorandum, March 1919. NA, MAF 60/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Untitled memorandum, March 1919. NA, MAF 60/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 30 April 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 30 April 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Kennedy Jones memo on national kitchens, 30 September 1919. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 26 May 1919. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Kennedy Jones memo on national kitchens, 30 September 1919. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Kennedy Jones memo on national kitchens, 30 September 1919. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. See Brock Millman, Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain (London, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Departmental Committee meeting on village canteens, 11 April 1918. NA, MAF 60/329. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Ministry of Food National Kitchens Branch, Kitchens Advisory Committee minutes, 19 February 1919. NA, MAF 60/329; see also The Manchester Guardian, 12 April 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Karen Hunt, ‘The Politics of Food and Women’s Neighborhood Activism in First World War Britain’, [*International Labor and Working-Class History*](http://journals.cambridge.org.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/action/displayFulltext?type=1&pdftype=1&fid=7436364&jid=ILW&volumeId=77&issueId=01&aid=7436356), 77/01, March 2010, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Peter J. Atkins, "Communal Feeding in War Time: British Restaurants, 1940–1947," in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska et al. eds., *Food and War in Twentieth Century Europe* (London, 2011) pp 139–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Spencer memo on the future of national kitchens, October 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Spencer to Rhondda, 16 January 1918. NA, MAF 60/310. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)