Militarization of nutrition in wartime Japan

Food assumes strategic significance in wartime, due to its basic role in strengthening the troops and enabling the productivity of workers, but also in its potential effect on population health and threat to public order. Measures implemented in wartime Japan to maximize the efficient use of food resources aimed at both, but their consequences went far beyond their intended goals.

Alongside the industrialization of production and the commercialization of consumption of food, many societies over the past hundred years have seen increased government interventions in their diets. The dissemination of nutritional science through various means has been aimed at persuading the general public to embrace the idea of a balanced diet. In the late 1920s, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, concerned with the potential of food shortages and policy-making to impact the welfare of the populace, military initiative projects coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce aimed at both, but...