

# The Cultural Politics of Austerity: Past and Present in Austere Times (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies)

Rebecca Bramall



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In the wake of the global financial crisis, the present 'age of austerity' has repeatedly been compared to the wartime and postwar austerity years. For many, the rise of austerity nostalgia suggests a compliant public in thrall to the command to 'keep calm and carry on' while the welfare state is dismantled around them. Yet, at the same time, the idea that the Second World War can serve as a compelling historical precedent for sustainable living has found favour in environmental and anti-consumerist debate. Challenging dominant approaches to 'austerity', Rebecca Bramall explores the presence and persuasiveness of the past in contemporary popular culture, focusing intensively on the contradictions, antagonisms, alternatives and possibilities that the current conjuncture presents. In doing so, she exemplifies a new approach to emergent uses of the past, questioning longstanding assumptions about the relationship between history, culture and politics.

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