

The Fascist Groove Thing

A History of Thatcher's Britain in 21 Mixtapes

Hugh Hodges

Preface: Dick Lucas • Foreword: Boff Whalley

This is the late 1970s and '80s as explained through the urgent and still-relevant songs of the Clash, the Specials, the Au Pairs, the Style Council, the Pet Shop Boys, and nearly four hundred other bands and solo artists. Each chapter presents a mixtape (or playlist) of songs related to an alarming feature of Thatcher's Britain, followed by an analysis of the dialogue these artists created with the Thatcherite vision of British society. "Tell us the truth," Sham 69 demanded, and pop music, however improbably, did. It's a furious and sardonic account of dark times when pop music raised a dissenting fist against Thatcher's fascist groove thing and made a glorious, boredom-smashing noise. Bookended with contributions by Dick Lucas and Boff Whalley as well as an annotated discography, *The Fascist Groove Thing* presents an original and polemical account of the era.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Hugh Hodges has written extensively on African and West Indian music, poetry, and fiction, including essays on Fela Kuti, Lord Kitchener, and Bob Marley. Linton Kwesi Johnson praised his book *Soon Come* as "extremely engaging and an important, original scholarly work." He currently teaches at Trent University, Ontario, where his research focuses on cultural resistance in its many forms, and his band the Red Finks remains hopelessly obscure.

Dick Lucas is a writer and visual artist, and the vocalist for three iconic punk bands: Subhumans, Citizen Fish, and Culture Shock. He is also the founder of independent punk label Bluurg Records.

Boff Whalley is a writer and musician, and a founding member of Chumbawamba. He is also an avid fell runner, the subject of his book *Run Wild*. His most recent musical project is Commoners Choir, a "strange yet open and inclusive choir that meets in Leeds." The choir's most recent release is *Untied Kingdom*, which Folk Radio praises as "an exhilarating display of rousing natural togetherness, of pride and of passion."

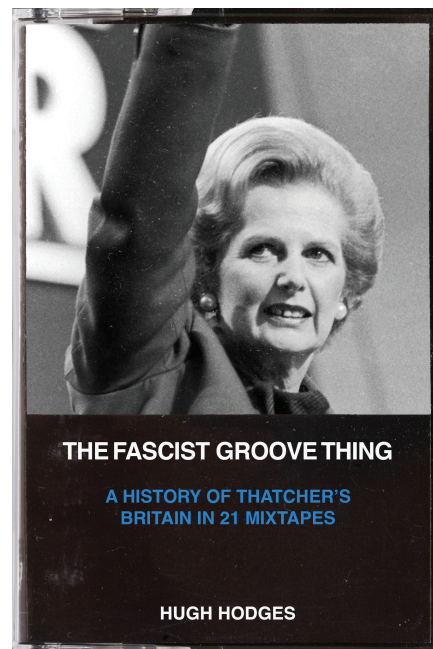
ACCOLADES

"It's not often that reading history books works best with a soundtrack playing simultaneously, but Hugh Hodges has succeeded in evoking both the noises and the feel of a tumultuous 1980s. Proving that pop music is the historian's friend, he has here recovered those who help us best make sense of a scary, precarious, and exciting world."

—Matthew Worley, author of *No Future: Punk, Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976–1984*

"Very interesting and timely indeed."

—Anne Clark, spoken word poet, *The Smallest Act of Kindness*



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