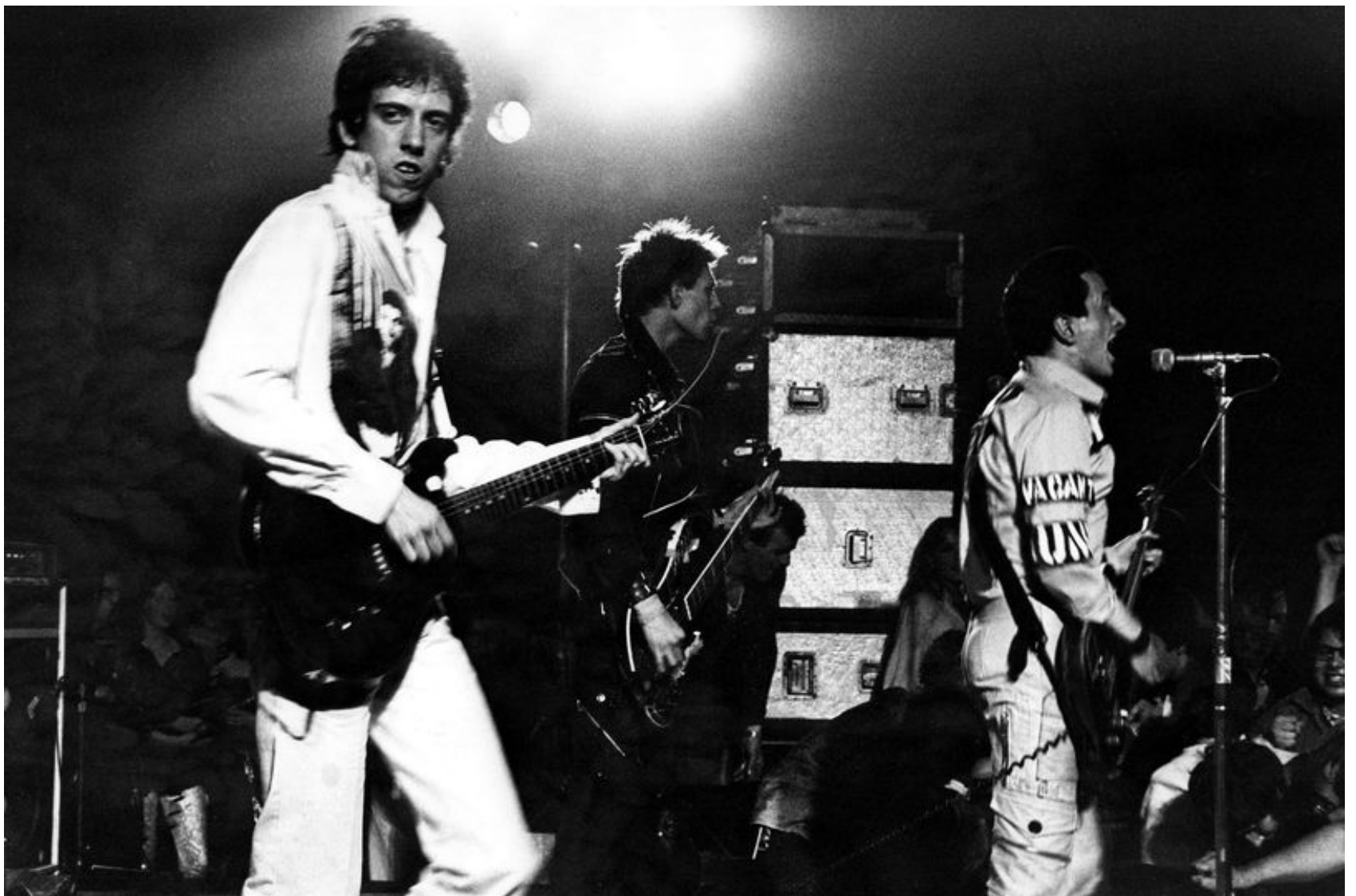


Trouble flared when iconic punk band The Clash played in Newcastle 45 years ago

When The Clash performed at Newcastle University's students' union bar in May 1977, there was trouble during and after the show

[David Morton](#)



The Clash in action at Newcastle University's students' union bar on May 20, 1977 - from left, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, and Joe Strummer (Image: Mirrorpix)

It's four and a half decades since punk rock arrived kicking and screaming.

The new genre's aggressive brand of back-to-basics rock, snarling attitudes, and radical fashions shook up a complacent music scene and outraged Britain's popular press and its readers at the same time. One of punk's prime exponents were The Clash, a band whose range of musical

styles - ska, rockabilly and dub, as well as punk - and topically politicised lyrics would separate them from their contemporaries.

In December 1976, they were on the line-up for a [Newcastle](#) show that would have been particularly memorable but in the event ended up being scrubbed. Along with fellow punk icons The Sex Pistols and The Damned, The Clash were due to perform at the City Hall on the Anarchy In The UK tour, but most of the shows - including Newcastle - were cancelled due to the controversy that followed the Pistols' infamous TV clash with Bill Grundy.

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Undeterred, five months later, The Clash - Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Topper Headon - rolled into town for a show at [Newcastle University's](#) students' union bar on their White Riot tour. The gig, which took place 45 years ago on May 20, 1977, was somewhat chaotic, but the band managed to power through an explosive set that included London's Burning, Police and Thieves, and their first single White Riot.

Strummer and his bandmates were left drenched thanks to a trademark punk audience spitting frenzy, while punks outside fought running battles with doormen as they tried to get into the ticket-only student event.



Joe Strummer and Topper Headon of The Clash on Tyneside in 1977 (Image: Newcastle Chronicle)

And there was more trouble after the show. The Clash, along with support band The Slits, were staying at the 131-bedroom Holiday Inn in Seaton Burn - a favourite resting place for touring acts stopping off in Newcastle. Our sister title *The Journal* reported how hotel guests complained of "noise and foul language".

The hotel manager told us: "Both groups were rowdy and obnoxious. A few glasses were broken and fire hoses unrolled during their stay. Before we allow them to stay again, we would want a good behaviour guarantee." The band's record label, CBS, was unapologetic, however, with a spokesman saying: "Their behaviour in the hotel was no worse than that of most rock bands."

The Clash would go on to earn much critical approval and commercial success before they finally broke up in 1986. If the punk phenomenon burned brightly but only relatively briefly in the late 1970s, their name is one from the time that is still revered today.

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