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## Rock Against Racism, 1978: When music united against fascism :: Reader View

<https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/culture/music/rock-against-r...>

In 1978, [Rock Against Racism](#) fought back against a surge of far right rhetoric with a historic concert, which united thousands of activists and music fans

On 30 April, 1978, 100,000 music fans marched on London's Victoria Park. This was [Rock Against Racism](#), a grassroots movement that for two years had been using [live music to campaign](#) against fascism, which was seeing a worrying uptick across the country.

When [Rock Against Racism](#) threw its first 1976 gig in East London's Princess Alice pub, the Sikh teenager Gurdip Singh Chagger had just been murdered.

"One down, a million to go," was the reaction of the National Front chairman, John Kingsley Read, to the stabbing. That same year, [David Bowie](#) had named Adolf Hitler "one of the first rock stars" to *Playboy*.

"Half your music is black. You're rock music's biggest colonist"

It was [Eric Clapton's](#) infamous outburst at the Birmingham Odeon—where he threw his support behind Enoch Powell's chilling "Rivers of Blood" speech (Clapton later admitted feeling ashamed and repeatedly apologised for his remarks)—that spurred the rock community to action.

"Come on Eric... Own up. Half your music is black. You're rock music's biggest colonist," read an open letter published to magazines like [NME](#) and [Melody Maker](#), which called on [anti-racist](#) rockers to assemble.



Courtesy of Visit Films/Rebekah Shah. The Clash showed onstage that racism had no place in true punk