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DVD REVIEW

PUBLIC ENEMY IT TAKES A NATION: THE FIRST LONDON INVASION, 1987

by Andrew Bunnell

At its peak, Public Enemy was the most important group in the world. Socially conscious, incredibly intelligent and highly controversial, the legendary rap group was the originator of rap music's role as the "Black CNN," reporting on the horrors of everyday life. The two best examples of the group's power and fury were 1988's *It Takes A Nation To Hold Us Back* and 1990's *Fear of a Black Planet*, stunning memorials to the power of Malcolm X and the civil rights movement, alerting

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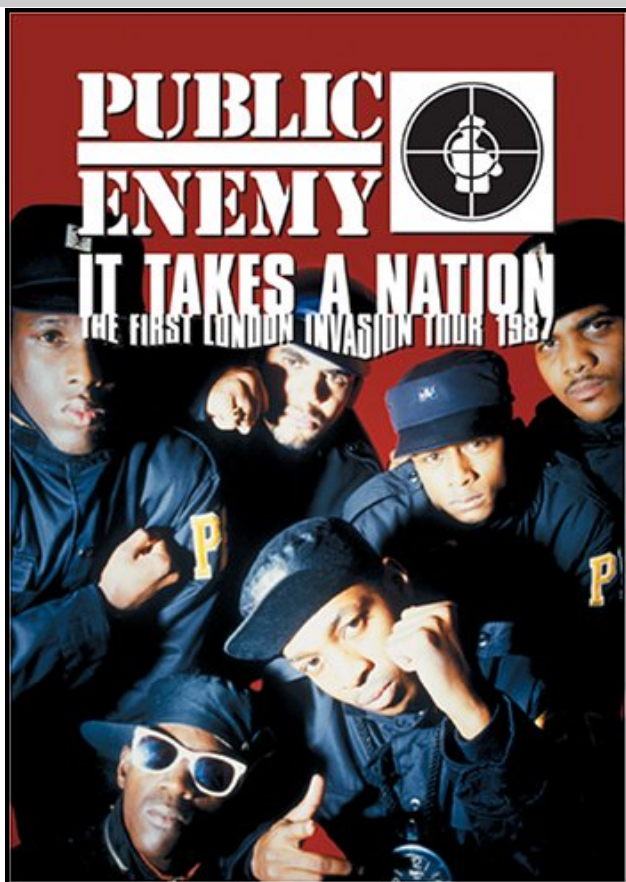
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America that there was a lot more work to be done.

The concert footage that appears on this DVD follows PE on its first tour of England in 1987.

Thatcher and Reagan ruled the world, Mandela was still in prison in South Africa, and the Wall had yet to crack in Germany. Though the group had yet to reach its peak, both musically and politically, the simmering anger and rage, not just at the state of Black America but at the state of the world at the time, is here in full glory.



Public Enemy - *It Takes A Nation: The First London Invasion, 1987*
(Music Video Distributors) (buy it!)

The performance is on fire. Chuck D is at his angry best.

Flavor Flav lightens the mood enough but never sinks to the clown he became in later years. The back- and off-stage footage is somewhat unnecessary and not always edited in well but it does provide an interesting contrast to the performance, showing the group as people and not just as preachers on stage.

The DVD also contains clips from a 2003 performance in Australia that shows a group that has lost none of the passion that made them so powerful in the first place.

For anyone that was a fan back in the day, this DVD is for you. For anyone that thinks rap music begins and ends with 50 Cent and Eminem, please watch this DVD. For anyone that needs an education on where rap music became an unstoppable entity, this is it.

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