

= The Nation of Ulysses =

The Nation of Ulysses was an American punk rock band from Washington , D.C. , formed in spring 1988 with four members . Originally known as simply " Ulysses , " the first mark of the group consisted of Ian Svenonius on vocals and trumpet , Steve Kroner on guitar , Steve Gamboa on bass guitar , and James Canty on drums . Tim Green joined the band late in 1989 as a guitarist and the band became " Nation of Ulysses . " Nation of Ulysses disbanded in the autumn of 1992 , having failed to complete their third album . After the breakup , Svenonius , Canty , and Gamboa went on to form the short @-@ lived Cupid Car Club and The Make @-@ Up . Tim Green went on to help create The Fucking Champs , a mostly @-@ instrumental progressive hard rock / math metal trio with indie pop appeal out of San Francisco , and later Concentrick , a solo project with a focus on ambient music .

Nation of Ulysses was known for their tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek , far @-@ left political concepts , their extremely physical live performances , and their unique take on punk culture and fashion . In total , Nation of Ulysses released three full @-@ length albums , and two vinyl EPs released on Dischord Records , and were featured on a number of compilation albums on a variety of record labels .

= = History = =

The band formed in spring 1988 , initially composed of four members ? Ian Svenonius on vocals and trumpet , Steve Kroner on guitar , Steve Gamboa on bass guitar , and James Canty on drums ? and known simply as " Ulysses . " In late 1989 , Tim Green joined the band as a second guitarist and the band was renamed to " Nation of Ulysses . "

In 1991 , before the band had released any official recordings , Ian Svenonius was featured as teen @-@ oriented Sassy Magazine 's first " Saggiest Boy in America . " He was interviewed at length in the magazine 's October issue , going into some depth about the band 's sound and political motivations .

In 1991 they released their first full @-@ length album , 13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America on Dischord Records . This was followed a year later by Plays Pretty for Baby , also on Dischord . During the recording of the band 's follow @-@ up to Plays Pretty for Baby , Steve Kroner left the band . The remaining quartet continued to record , but eventually dissolved in 1992 . In a later interview , Svenonius explained the reason for the split : " Nation of Ulysses broke up because the epoch changed with the advent of digital music and the Nirvana explosion . We were faced with what 's now known as indie rock , a sort of vacuous form . We had to determine our next move and this [the forming of the Make @-@ Up] is it . "

After the band 's dissolution , Svenonius went on to form the short @-@ lived Cupid Car Club with James Canty and Steve Gamboa , the Make @-@ Up (again with Canty and Gamboa) , and Weird War . Green went on to become an engineer and record producer and joined the prog @-@ heavy metal band The Fucking Champs .

Though relatively short @-@ lived , Nation of Ulysses ' influence has been substantial : they have been cited as influences for bands such as The (International) Noise Conspiracy , The Hives , Thursday , Refused , Boysetsfire , Bikini Kill , Rocket From The Crypt , Antioch Arrow , The Locust , At The Drive @-@ in , LCD Soundsystem , and Huggy Bear , among many others .

= = Recordings = =

During Nation of Ulysses ' four years of activity , they released only two full @-@ length albums : 13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America in 1991 and Plays Pretty for Baby in 1992 , both released on Dischord Records . After releasing Plays Pretty for Baby , the band began recording a third full @-@ length album , but Steve Kroner separated from the band before recording was completed . The remaining quartet continued to record , but the group eventually dissolved before the record 's completion . In 2000 , six songs from those sessions , in addition to four new tracks recorded live ,

were compiled and released posthumously as The Embassy Tapes .

In addition to their three full @-@ length albums , Nation of Ulysses released two vinyl EPs . The first , a self @-@ titled EP , was the band 's first official release , but went out of print when the three tracks from it were included in 13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America . The second EP , released in 1992 under the title The Birth of the Ulysses Aesthetic (the synthesis of speed and transformation) , also went out of print when its tracks were later released on Plays Pretty for Baby . The band were also featured in a number of compilation albums on a variety of record labels .

In 1992 , NOU was on tour with Bikini Kill , and when they arrived in Memphis , they found that the promoter for the show hadn 't actually promoted the show . So , while out on the town flying the streets and ducking into record stores , NOU ran into Primal Scream , a band which had been in town recording their own album . Primal Scream then decided to attend NOU 's show at the Antenna Club , and then proceeded to invite NOU to record with them in the studio the next day . Nation of Ulysses then recorded five songs with Primal Scream in nine hours , though of course only after a quick errand for some tin foil to smoke a bit of crack , according to Tim Green . These recordings are known as Memphis Demos , and include the demos of N @-@ Sub Ulysses , 50 @,@ 000 Watts , Mockingbird , Yeah , and Shakedown .

= = Musical ideology and style = =

Nation of Ulysses ' music was noisy and manic , but they also had a strong free @-@ jazz influence . The group embodied a rejection of the 1960s and 1970s music and styling by rejecting drug use and advocating that punk youth dress nicely and sensibly . To this end , the liner notes of 13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America states the band 's aim " To dress well , as clothing and fashion , are the only things which we -- the kids -- being utterly disenfranchised , have any control over . " Much of the band admitted to not knowing how to play their instruments well , stating " All you need is a concept . There 's no reason you have to sound like Led Zeppelin . "

= = Political concepts = =

Nation of Ulysses described themselves not as a rock ' n ' roll group in the traditional sense , but " as a political party " and as " a shout of secession . " Explaining their intent , Svenonius said " it 's basically a new nation underground for the dispossessed youth colony . It 's all about smashing the old edifice , the monolith of rock and roll . "

Allmusic 's Steve Huey described Nation of Ulysses ' philosophy as " a relentlessly provocative (and entertaining) jumble of teenage rock ' n ' roll rebellion , leftist radicalism , anarchist punk polemics , and abstract intellectual rambling , [...] [which gives the sense of] an off @-@ kilter , almost tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek approach to a ' perpetual 18 @-@ year old 's ' view of America , and life in general . " This tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek political attitude was echoed by a spoken @-@ word introduction to the song " The Sound of Jazz to Come " , from their 1992 Plays Pretty for Baby , in which the band describes themselves as " the seriously unserious , reverently irreverent , amoral moralists . "

Asked about their use of the medium they claimed to counteract ? rock ' n ' roll ? Svenonius declared " Well , it 's a camouflage , to allow for movement , revolutionary liberation from the constraints of everyday composure , basically allowing anybody to move in anyway that they want and to lift spirit to a plateau to destroy ' parent culture . " "

Nation of Ulysses claimed to make weapons , not records . Discussing their second release , Svenonius asserted : " it 's like a blueprint for the destruction of the Parent Culture . It 's like a zip gun ... It 's an instruction pamphlet for kids on how to destroy their home life , you know , their domestic state . "

Although their first album was named 13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America , Nation of Ulysses didn 't align themselves with a particular political philosophy : " We don 't usually address normal political dictums . We aim toward the everyday fixtures of life , like aesthetics , sound , non @-@ spoken things that are inherently political in nature instead of , like bogus politicians who focus

on glossy surface issues which avoid any kind of revolutionary change . "

= = = Ulysses Speaks = = =

Nation of Ulysses published a zine called " Ulysses Speaks , " which was an extension of their ideology expressed in their music and liner notes . The zines espoused what they referred to as " The Ulysses Aesthetic , " which was a mix of 1960s and 1970s radical politics , French Situationist writings , and juvenile delinquency . The zine was distributed at live shows as well as made available by writing the band . A total of 9 issues were published .

= = Live performances = =

The band was known for their extremely physical performances , during some of which Svenonius recalls breaking his arm , his leg , and breaking his head open on numerous occasions . Audience members were also hurt during performances . Svenonius described Nation of Ulysses performances as " an extraordinary freak @-@ out kind of thing [...] really masochistic , lots of blood [...] cacophonous , and violent , and aggressive . "

= = Discography = =

= = = Studio albums = = =

13 @-@ Point Program to Destroy America (Dischord) (1991)

Plays Pretty for Baby (Dischord) (1992)

The Embassy Tapes (Dischord) (2000)

= = = Studio EPs = = =

Nation of Ulysses (Dischord) (1991)

The Birth of the Ulysses Aesthetic (the synthesis of speed and transformation) (Dischord) (1992)