

Rudé Pravo, Music

[Excerpts] Long-haired fanatics leaping around to the deranged noise of vibrating loudspeakers accompanied the antics of those in the heavy-metal band with insane roars—the band members wore torn jeans and cartridge belts around their hips. Fists clenched threateningly were thrust up against the evening sky. The sound of "Heil! Heil! Heil!" [German words used] resounded through the valley of the open-air arena. . . . Someone on the stage shouted: "Ku Klux Klan!"

I unwittingly looked around to see whether crosses would be set on fire and manhunt against blacks would begin. . . .

This is not the atmosphere of a gathering of punks or skinheads in West Germany. It took place at a concert by the lesser-known Prague amateur band Toerr, which performed in Bratislava on 18 August. . . .

The recurring themes of Toerr's sounds are death, graves, corpses, hopelessness, loneliness, pessimism, and passive expectation. In general, the song's lyrics feature the terminology of dubious and banned religious sects. In its song "Bad Dream," Toerr sings: "Light is shining through a crevice in my grave. I feel sin and evil when I go to bed at night. Zombies, nuclear rain, Sabbath witches, and streams of blood lie all around me!" What is the sense of this?

"It is meant to be a protest against all the abuses in our society," Milan Hava, the band's leader, contends.

The commission of the Prague Cultural Center, whose test auditions Toerr successfully passed in November, apparently does not mind the fact that the band's lyrics are too gloomy and its music rather monotonous, and only at times expressive. Neither did the municipal district national committee in Prague-10, which issued the decree that authorizes Toerr to give concerts independently, find anything offensive with the band's repertoire. The chief program adviser of the Bratislava Park of Culture and Repose, who is directly responsible for the ideological content of the songs of performing groups, and the municipal district national committee in Bratislava-1, which allowed Toerr to play in the open-air arena, also had no objections.

This is incomprehensible formalism on the part of four institutions.

Bratislava inhabitants returning from work on 18 August in the evening saw about 10 Toerr fans at the trolley station near the open-air arena. They were unashamedly urinating on the sidewalk. [passage omitted] That, too, appears to be a sign of protest against abuses in our society.

Source: "Heavy Metal Band at Cultural Center Criticized," September 7, 1988, *Rudé Pravo*, trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).