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Staying hungry



The last major Czech hunger strike took place 16 years ago, lasted 100 days and ended in failure. No one, of course, can go 100 days without food, but doctors were trotted out who swore Miloslav Mareček was not eating on the sly. The two modern-day hunger strikers, Jan Tamáš and Jan Bednář, avoided such a comedy by ending their three-week, liquids-only, anti-radar strike before jokes about extra-pulpy orange juice and liquefied mush started circulating. For men on the verge of starvation, they remained amazingly lucid and correctly identified the precise moment when enough was enough. ČSSD Chair Jiří Paroubek came to the rescue, first asking them paternally to call off the strike and then embracing a series of 24-hour celebrity fasts. Perhaps this was all planned in advance, but Paroubek's insatiable appetite for media attention has made this latest hunger strike an undeniable PR success.



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