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Rebel rousing in Prague

TOP 09 won the Prague municipal elections last Oct. by keeping Miroslav Kalousek out of the limelight and by strutting Karel Schwarzenberg and Zdeněk Tůma as its mascots. If repeat Prague elections are held in June or later this year (which seems likely), whitewashing the negative Kalousek brand won't be possible again. Whatever gain TOP could hope to enjoy from the backlash against the ODS-ČSSD grand coalition would be offset by the VAT melee. TOP's supporters could have rallied behind a 17% VAT rate, but not 20%. TOP could also lose points because its election leader, Zdeněk Tůma, has been practically invisible in the opposition. It might even need to scout out a new leader. Otherwise, it could find that after the elections it needs to negotiate not only with ODS and ČSSD to form a majority city assembly, but also with a slew of pesky rebels, such as the [Greens](#), [SNK](#), [SSO](#), [Občané.cz](#) and the [Bobo party](#).

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