

Czech Cultural Revolution

Karolína Peake went down in history as the eight-day defense minister, but the record was broken (in reverse) last week when PM Jiří Rusnok ordered the reinstatement of Jan Burian as director of the National Theater after just one day of redundancy.

Despite the need for the PM to intervene, Rusnok said that Culture Minister Jiří Balvín's intention was not bad. Burian was chosen for the post in a closed selection process, and Rusnok said that Balvín had the fine idea of choosing people for key cultural positions in open selection processes. Do you see the incongruity? The Rusnok cabinet itself was pulled out of Miloš Zeman's hat, without vetting by voters or Parliament, and the cabinet has since replaced something like 80 key people in government and state-owned businesses without clear rhyme or reason. Yet Rusnok likes the idea of applying a strict recruitment procedure to *culture*. Never has culture been given such a high priority in a society since Mao Zedong's euphemistic Cultural Revolution in China. We all know how that turned out.

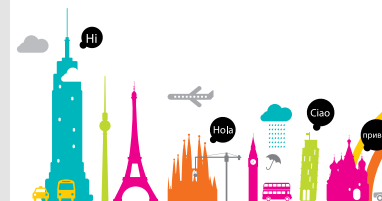
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