


An uncommon oligarch



Behind every great fortune lies a crime, Balzac famously said, and most of the great Czech fortunes are true to these words.

What makes Andrej Babiš different from the other Czech oligarchs who stole their way to the top is that he went into politics and thereby invited an examination of his past. At least theoretically, he must do a lot more explaining than Petr Kellner, Patrik Tkáč and even Zdeněk Bakala. Nor is Babiš in the same position as Bohuslav Sobotka, who knew from Day One that he was going to be a politician and therefore went to great effort to cover his tracks with layers of camouflage. If Babiš had known he was going to enter politics, he would have been more careful to layer the Stork's Nest fraud involving a paltry Kč 50m subsidy. Instead,

he went around bragging about his piece of work. If he were a run-of-the-mill oligarch, he could just buy off the police and prosecutor and be done with it. But he's the anti-corruption finance minister who promised to combat this very kind of skull-duggery. He's supposed to be better than the average oligarch.

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