

RIEGER'S MEMOIRE TO NAPOLEON III FROM THE YEAR
1869

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After the end of neoabsolutism (1859) the Czech bourgeoisie sought to consolidate its power position within the Austrian state by means of foreign contacts. Emissaries of the Czech national movement established close ties with Russia, France and even Prussia, and thus created a „pre-state“ Czech foreign policy. The initiators of these foreign policy contacts were František Palacký and his son-in-law František Ladislav Rieger. As a leading politician of the pro-Declaration [of Rights and Expectations] party which energetically opposed the Cisleithanian solution of the problem of the Austrian state and empire, Rieger played a key role in the „pilgrimage to Moscow“. A uniform pan-Slav policy was, however, thwarted by protests of the Poles against the Czech efforts in Moscow. The turn toward Tsarist Russia aroused great mistrust in France. When Rieger presented a secretly prepared memoir addressed to Napoleon III in 1869, official quarters reacted with considerable reserve. The Quai d'Orsay subjected the arguments set forth by Rieger to a thorough expert critique, guided more by the question of the potential political utility of Rieger's intervention for France's alliance plans than by any unambiguous pro-Czech sympathies.