

GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE URANIUM MINES OF JÁCHYMOV, 1945—1950

Otto Böss

The utilization of about 5000 German war prisoners in the uranium mines of Jáchymov (St. Joachimsthal) in the years 1945—1950 is a largely unknown chapter of postwar history. On the basis of sources that have only recently become available, the author describes the fate of this group of German war prisoners, which though relatively small numerically, was not without significance in the larger economic-political and perhaps also strategic context. The prisoners engaged in the process of enriching uranium ore — which brought hardly any benefit to the Czechoslovak economy but was undoubtedly of strategic importance for the Soviet Union. This study describes in detail the living conditions of the thousands of German war prisoners used for this purpose on Czechoslovak territory.