

SUMMARIES

“THE ELECTIONS HAVE TO BE DECIDED IN ADVANCE!”

The First Postwar Year in the Region Ústí Nad Labem and the Electoral Victory of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1945/46)

Volker Zimmermann

Research on the communist struggle for power in Czechoslovakia after 1945 has so far neglected regional developments. To examine the activities of regional party organizations and administrative bodies and to analyze how the local population reacted to changes in the political and social situation can, however, furnish new insights into this topic. On the example of the region of Ústí nad Labem (Aussig) in Northern Moravia, with its German majority, the present contribution shows how the CPCS in the very first year after the war succeeded in assuming a predominant position by systematically developing its regional organizations. The remaining parties did nothing to halt these activities. On the contrary, with their nationalist propaganda they contributed to aggravate social antagonisms which were, however, exploited principally by the CPCS. The May 1946 elections were proof that regions like Ústí nad Labem represented the forefront of the communist effort to seize power – here, their dominance in society and politics went unchallenged two years before the “victorious february of ‘48”.