

The dissertation presents the history of the Union of Silesian Catholics, the oldest Polish political party in Cieszyn Silesia, in 1920-1939. Chapter 1 presents the genesis of the Polish national bloc in the region and its - important for a variety of reasons - divisions and religious antagonisms and the beginnings of the Union of Silesian Catholics (USC). The Party's electorate included largely disciplined peasants and some working-class members led mainly by the clergy. The Party was a unique guide for Catholics in public affairs. Chapter 2, consisting of three subchapters, presents the structure, organisational development and main programme assumptions of the Union of Silesian Catholics after the division of Cieszyn Silesia in July 1920. Considerable space is devoted to a discussion of the Party's activities, its development and range of influence in social organisations and municipal authorities, and finally, to the origins and causes of the increasingly strong division of the Party into two factions, one led by Fr. Londzin and the other by Fr. Eugeniusz Brzuska leaning towards the Christian Democrats. The chapter also addresses the extremely important issue of the USC's cooperation with the Upper Silesian Christian Democrats. It also discusses the course of municipal elections and the functioning of the "Cieszyn Star", the Party's press release journal. The May coup of 1926 resulted in a regrouping of political forces throughout the country. Chapter 3 illustrates an extremely important problem in the political history of Cieszyn Silesia and the entire Silesian Voivodeship, namely, the political turn of the leader of the Union of Silesian Catholics, Fr. Józef Londzin towards the Sanation movement. An analysis was made indicating the reasons for the Party President's cooperation with the Sanation camp in Silesia. The authority of Fr. Londzin bound the organisation together. Chapter 4 (final) presents the political situation after his death in April 1929, which became a turning point in the history of the Party. This chapter discusses the functioning of the Union of Silesian Catholics under the leadership of Fr. Emanuel Grim. The following part of the work presents the next stage of the Party's peculiar search for political paths, i.e. cooperation and the so-called unification action with the National Christian Labour Union and its Sanation ties. It shows the period of the so-called decomposition of the Sanation camp after the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the attitude of activists from the Union of Silesian Catholics to the programme assumptions of the National Unification Camp, a new party whose main task was to strengthen the defence of the state and implement the provisions of the April Constitution of 1935. The discussion of the Party's long and winding political paths after Fr. Londzin's death is concluded with a discussion of the organisation's last attempt at political independence in 1939. The Party's attitude to the problem of Zaolzie, which was of interest to almost all Poles in Cieszyn Silesia and the "brotherly" Union of Silesian Catholics in

Czechoslovakia operating there, is discussed, and the most important problems of this Zaolzie organisation are highlighted.