PART II

RHETORIC AND RELIGION

5. RELIGION AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE
"THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION" AND ITS TRADITION IN
POLAND: THE CHURCH, POLITICS, AND
RHETORIC IN 1981–1989

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Such maltreatment of man that PZPR [the communist party] has committed is what we have not seen for a long time. Let God have mercy on those who have compromised communism and Marxism.

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, 1965

I. Introduction

The relationship between the Catholic Church, the Government and the Communist Party in Poland, and particularly the rhetorical aspects of that relationship, is an exceptionally important research problem. As pointed out by e.g. Cezary Ornatowski1 and Andrzej Chwalba,2 the authors quoted in a book by Jerzy Axer,3 that relationship has never been smooth, and has always been exceptionally complex. It is especially noteworthy that, as Andrzej Chwalba has demonstrated, religious metaphors have always been present in the Polish, not exactly political but socialist, phraseology.4 Complications also arise from a common belief that the meanings of religious concepts used in public discourse in Poland in the 1990s determine the values that we link with e.g. democratic values or sometimes even liberal ones, though they rest on religious beliefs.5 They are usually some language clichés which become

2 Andrzej Chwalba, Sacrum i rewolucja; socjalisci polscy wobec praktyk i symboli religijnych (1870–1918), wyd. 2, (Kraków, 2007).
4 Andrzej Chwalba, ibid., 278–286.