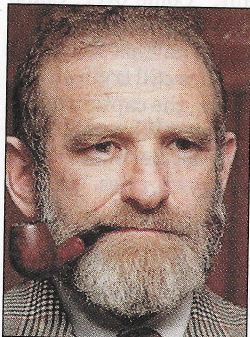


PEOPLE OF  
THE YEAR

POLAND

## Learning to Work With the Government, Not Against It

When the protesters win and the old order subsides, someone has to make a new system work. In Poland, one of those people is Bronislaw Geremek, 57, a medieval historian turned present-day politician. Geremek is the parliamentary leader of Solidarity, the independent trade union that now leads Poland's governing coalition. He is of Jewish extraction, a fact



FRANCO ZECCHIN—MAGNUM  
GEREMEK

that apparently has not hurt his political career. For years Geremek was a union strategist and key adviser to Solidarity's leader, Lech Walesa. Now, as Poland tries to make the perilous transition from communism to democracy, he occupies an unaccustomed place in the spotlight. "After 40 years Parliament has become an important place where policies are determined, and which is very closely observed by society," he says. "I don't think there is another country in the world where sessions of both houses are followed with such attention." Geremek was mentioned as a potential prime minister when it was up to Walesa to choose someone for the job. The union leader selected Tadeusz Mazowiecki, but should the new government falter, Geremek could yet take a turn as prime minister. The Solidarity-led coalition is encountering all the difficulties it originally anticipated, including rampant inflation (more than 50 percent a month). Generally, Poles have been more patient in the face of hardship than many expected. Government leaders hope that, if they can get through the winter without major unrest, they will begin to see positive results from their efforts to introduce market-style reforms in the economy. Initially, says Geremek, "some people had great problems in adapting to positive work, where you have to help the government. They grew up in the traditions of battle [against authority]. The psychological change is not yet complete."