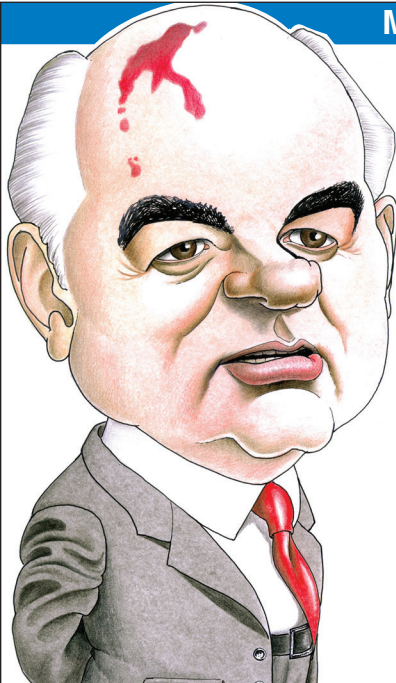


MIKHAIL GORBACHEV



Born: Privolnoye, Russia, Mar 2, 1931

1952: Joins Communist Party

1953: Completes law degree at Moscow University

1954: Marries **Raisa Titorenko**. One daughter – **Irina**

1956: Becomes head of agriculture department for Stavropol region

1971: Attracts attention of Politburo members **Mikhail Suslov** and **Yuri Andropov** – elected to party's powerful Central Committee

1980: Elected full Politburo member

1982: Influence grows after his mentor Andropov succeeds **Leonid Brezhnev** as General Secretary of Soviet Union

1984: Visits Britain, meets **Margaret Thatcher** and other political leaders

1985: Chosen to succeed **Konstantin Chernenko** as Soviet leader. Adopts more accessible and personable approach. Holds first summit with U.S. President **Ronald Reagan** in Geneva

1986: Further improves relations with West. Thatcher declares him “a man we can do business with.” Initiates period of political openness (*glasnost*) and transformation (*perestroika*) to modernize U.S.S.R.

1988: Elected to newly-created post of President of the Soviet Union

1990: Awarded Nobel Peace Prize

Mar 1991: Referendum victory for plan to maintain Soviet Union in looser federation

Aug: Attempted coup by Communist hard-liners fails through lack of army support and mass street protests led by Russian president **Boris Yeltsin**. However, Gorbachev's authority is fatally undermined as leaders of republics seize power initiative

Dec: Left without a meaningful role, Gorbachev resigns on Christmas Day. Soviet Union is dissolved

1995: Founds global *State of the World Forum* to address environment and poverty issues

1996: Gets less than one percent of vote in presidential election

2000: Attacks legal attempts to shut down *Media-Most*, Russia's largest independent media group – “the reforms of the last 15 years are under threat”