

# Mikhail Gorbachev

The last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev brought about huge political and social changes that led to the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism in Europe



■ **Mar 2, 1931:** **Mikhail Gorbachev** born into peasant family in southern Russian territory of Stavropol

■ **1952:** Joins Communist Party. Enters law school at Moscow University, where he meets and later marries **Raisa Titarenko** (right). Couple have one daughter, **Irina**, born in 1957



■ **Nov 1985:** Meets U.S. President **Ronald Reagan**, for first time. Series of 1980s summits signal end of Cold War

■ **1955:** Graduates with law degree, goes on to hold number of Communist Party posts in Stavropol, becoming party leader in 1970

■ **1978:** Summoned to Moscow to take up post of Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture. Becomes full member of Politburo – USSR's top ruling body – in 1980

■ **1990:** Receives Nobel Peace Prize for improving relations with West and ending nuclear arms race

■ **Aug 1991:** Coup by Communist Party hard-liners fails after mass protests led by Russian President **Boris Yeltsin**



■ **Dec 1991:** His authority fatally undermined, Gorbachev resigns. Soviet Union officially dissolved

■ **1992:** Establishes political think-tank **Gorbachev Foundation**

■ **1996:** Makes one final bid for presidency of Russia, but receives just over one percent of vote



■ **Mar 1985:** Made Soviet leader after Death of **Konstantin Chernenko**. Begins efforts to revive Soviet economy through policies of “glasnost” (openness) and perestroika (rebuilding)