



## President Mikhail Gorbachev

Mr. Gorbachev was born on March 2, 1931 at Stavropol in the northern Caucasus. From 1950 until 1955 he studied law at Moscow State University, where he was a leader of the Komsomol (Young Communist League). He earned a degree in agriculture from the Stavropol Agriculture Institute in 1967. He joined the Communist Party in 1952.

Mr. Gorbachev's early career included Komsomol and party posts in Stavropol. In 1970 at age 39, he became First Secretary of the Stavropol Kray Party Committee. Since 1970, he has been a deputy to the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, representing a district from Stavropol. In 1971, he was elected a full member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gorbachev was appointed the Central Committee's Secretary for Agriculture in 1978. He was designated a candidate member of the Politburo the following year and a full member in 1980 at the age of 49 (the average age of other members was over 70). From 1979 until 1984 he chaired the Legislative Proposals Commission of the Council of the Union of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet. He was also Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission from early 1984 until July 1985, when he was elected to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

Mr. Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985, and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in October 1988. As General Secretary, he also heads the Defence Council, the co-ordinating body for Soviet military activity. As Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, he is the country's president and head of state. He was re-elected Chairman in May of this year by the new Supreme Soviet.

Mr. Gorbachev came to Canada in 1983 as Secretary for Agriculture in the Politburo.

Mr. Gorbachev's wife, Raisa, studied philosophy at Moscow State University and has lectured on the subject. They have one daughter and two granddaughters.