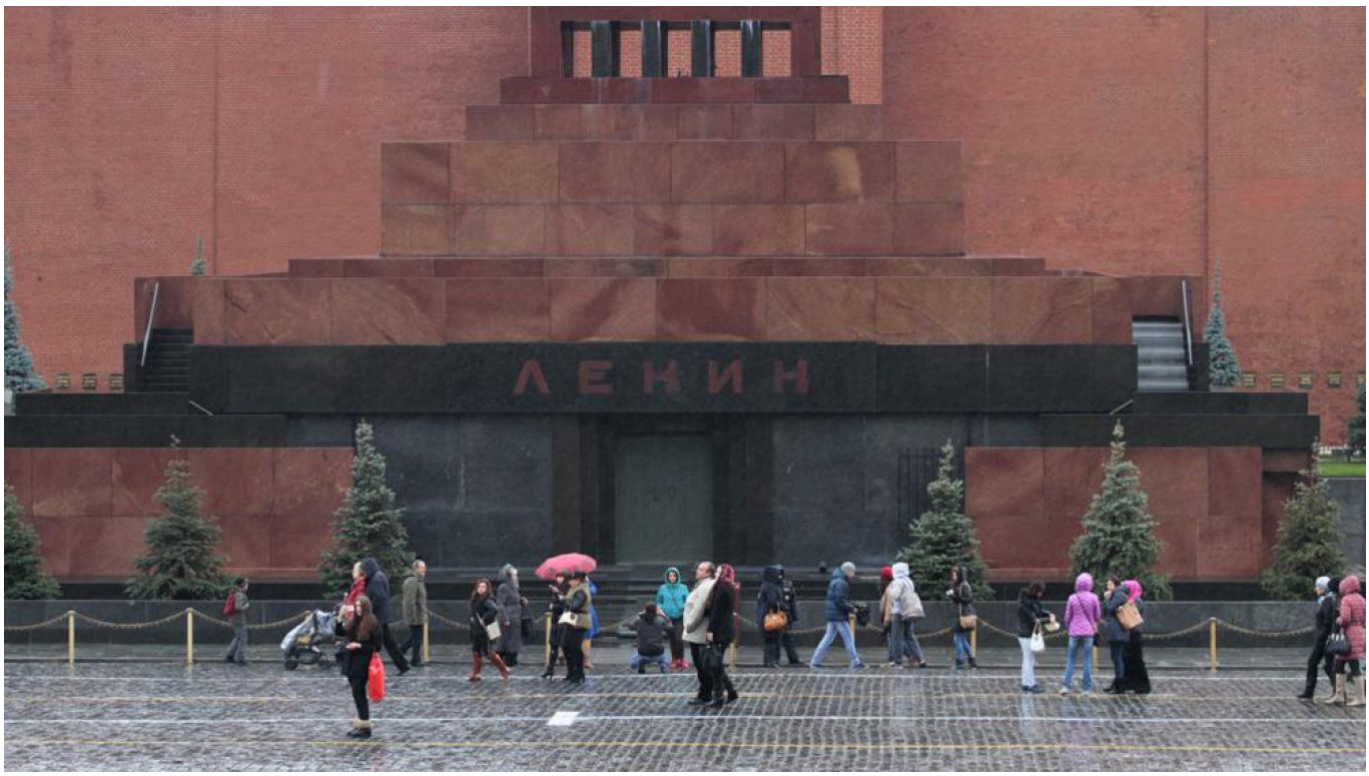
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Putin Compares Communism to Christianity

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Moskva News Agency

Russia's President Vladimir Putin said that Communism is "very similar" to Christianity while comparing Lenin's mausoleum to saints' relics, as part of televised remarks aired in Russia over the weekend.

A century after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, a debate has reignited over whether to move Vladimir Lenin's corpse from its Red Square mausoleum to another location. In the Soviet era, long lines of supporters would pay their respects to Lenin's preserved body in a ceremony that was reminiscent of a religious ritual.

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"Communist ideology is very similar to Christianity, in fact, freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice — all of that is laid out in Scripture," Putin said in a clip from the "Valaam"

documentary film that was aired on Sunday.

The president went on to say that the moral code for Soviet citizens was based on “a primitive extract from the Bible."

“Lenin was placed inside a mausoleum: How is that different from holy relics?” he asked, ⊠while acknowledging that "someone might not like" the comparison⊠.

Russia’s Communist Party welcomed Putin’s remarks as “reasonably smoothing out the controversies surrounding Lenin’s tomb,” party deputy head Ivan Melnikov was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency on Sunday.

“Communists and all other patriotic leftists know that communism is as close to Christianity as Christianity is far from those forms of capitalism that are in our country and economy today,” he said.

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