Jesus Was the First Communist, Russian Party Leader Says

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Russian Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov. **Denis Grishkin / Moskva News Agency**

The world's first communist was none other than Jesus Christ, the head of Russia's Communist Party has said.

"Put Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and the Moral Code of the Builder of Communism next to each other, and you will just gasp," Gennady Zyuganov said Thursday in a radio interview with the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid.

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He added that "the main slogan of communism — 'He who does not work shall not eat' — is written in the Apostle Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians" found in the New Testament.

"We need to study the Bible," Zyuganov concluded.

His comments come as the Communist Party of Russia seeks to win seats in the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, during the Sept. 17–19 parliamentary election.

Such a statement would likely have been unheard of during the Soviet era, when the communist government followed a policy of state atheism.

But in the post–Soviet years — particularly in the past decade of President Vladimir Putin's rule — the government has forged links with the Russian Orthodox Church.

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