

Kremlin insider calls for Lenin to be buried

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Russians should move the embalmed body of revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin from Moscow's Red Square and bury him as an act of closure on Russia's turbulent past, a Kremlin insider said on Wednesday.

Lenin led the Bolshevik revolution in November 1917 which cemented Communist rule in Russia and the Soviet Union for the next 74 years.

"We have only just moved away from revolutions, from turbulent political battles, the country wants to live normally, to work, to be rich," Vladimir Kozhin, one of the Kremlin's top administrators in charge of its property portfolio including Red Square, told the official daily, *Rossiskaya Gazeta*.

Russia's first post-Soviet leader, Boris Yeltsin, more than once spoke in favor of removing the mausoleum from Red square. But strong pro-Communist sentiment in the country prevented him from doing so.

President Vladimir Putin has brought relative stability to Russia since he came to power in 2000 after the chaotic post-Soviet 1990s. Cash from oil and gas revenues has underpinned that stability and propelled a resurgence in Russian national pride.

Doctors embalmed Lenin's body days after he died in 1924 and laid him out in a mausoleum in Red Square. Lines of waiting tourists -- both domestic and foreign -- stretch around the Kremlin's walls as they wait to file past his body for the few minutes the guards allow.

"Of course, having this necropolis at the centre of the city is nonsense," Kozhin said, adding he wanted a national referendum on whether Lenin should be moved and buried.

"And if 80 percent of the people say that Lenin should be moved and buried then it is up to us to act on that decision," he said.