question," the "social question," the "women's question," and "the Jewish question." What exactly was the relationship between these questions and their formulation as questions and World War I or the "Final Solution" and how did these disasters bring the age to a close? We thumb through lots of pamphlets without seeing how posing questions changed the way contemporaries thought about and acted on politics or how they constituted politics. Too many circumscribed examples—the result of Google and other digital searches—effectively postpone engagement. The argument gains neither the altitude nor the depth it anticipates. The exclamation mark she proposes for the age of questions persistently dissolves in the mind of the sympathetic but disappointed reader into a question mark.

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Republicanism in Russia: Community Before and After Communism. By Oleg Kharkhordin. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2018. vi, 307 pp. Notes. Index. $49.95, hard bound.
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Oleg Kharkhordin's conceptually impressive work traces the historical roots of republican thought, explores the obstacles to its realization inherited from the Soviet experience, and points to ways it has manifested itself in contemporary Russia. A wide-ranging integration of linguistics, historical experience, and cutting-edge sociological research, the book elaborates a theory of *res publica* that suggests the possibility of genuine public life in contemporary Russia.

In the Introduction, Kharkhordin provocatively posits that "the freedom that best suits [post-Soviet Russia] is of a republican rather than a liberal nature" (1). He defines republicanism in a functional way as "islands of free life" in which citizens come together in "municipal experiments in participatory budgeting, urban movements defending architectural and cultural heritage, free thinking and shared governance in new academic institutions—and many more similar examples" (3). He hopes that "these islands could eventually produce an Archipelago of Freedom" (3) as schools of civic participation are more pragmatic than the "mechanisms of representative democracy" that the Russians copied from the west with the resultant "electoral authoritarianism" of rigged voting (6). In other words, he points to the technique of local self-government "with its emphasis on participation, mixed government, and the like" (6). This is something that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn had famously promoted in his 1990 essay "Rebuilding Russia," although his name does not appear in Kharkhordin's book. One would expect that Kharkhordin would explore the late imperial experience of the zemstvos, created by the Great Reforms of Tsar Alexander II, but instead he calls for "an epochal transformation that could reactualize the Pushkin-era background of aristocratic Russian culture steeped in ancient Greek and Roman models of civic words and public deeds" (253). Furthermore, Kharkhordin argues that local self-government formed part of a broader era "from the mid-nineteenth through the twentieth century" when "Russia was characterized by what would more aptly be called 'common-ism' than Communism" (8).

The first chapter traces the evolution of the concept of friendship in Russia and Kharkhordin concludes by quoting Dmitry Kalugin's argument that "starting from the enlightened days of Karamzin and Pushkin, narratives on friendship speak mainly of spiritual phenomena, while making almost no mention of tangible and durable things" (27). The significance here is that the new meanings that emerge from human

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contact in Russian society depend on ineffable connections, which makes them difficult to translate into the world of *res publica*, or public things (and issues), existing outside individuals, but acting as temporary sites of social negotiation.

The second chapter examines the concept of *res publica* through ancient Roman "speech acts or discursive practices" that brings the reader to "the study of infrastructures of access to sites of the verbal production of truth and institutional reality" (59). The author then explores the effect that Russia's new 2004 Housing Code had on civil society by making intra-home common spaces and infrastructure outside of individual apartments the "common shared property of a condominium" (59). The two studies that Kharkhordin examines suggest that the study of republican language leads to issues of material infrastructure and the study of infrastructure leads to linguistic issues, which means that "the visibility and tangibility of common things is a seed bed for *res publica*, but for a community to rise from the level of common things to the level of *res publica*, one needs words and a form of life that establishes a *iuris consensus*, a common sentiment of things legal" (68). The crux of the findings is that contemporary Russian society may have many common, but few social phenomena that impede the development of civil society.

Contemporary Russian society, Kharkhordin argues in chapter three, "is first and foremost an agent of action rather than an arena for action" (75). Part of the problem with the public's disdain "for phenomena designated by the term *obshchestvennyi*" is the Soviet legacy of distrust for all public and officially sponsored activities. Instead of a public life in Hannah Arendt's definition, the Soviet Union had only "the oppressive 'social'" (77), so the "linguistic fetters from Soviet days" (78) indelibly associate *obshchestvennyi* (social) with *obshchii* (common). The Soviet concept of *obshchestvennost'* (socialness) both "forc[ed] associations into existence" and "enforce[ed] individual conformity" (91). It was particularly under Khrushchev that "Communist self-governance" emerged to counterbalance Stalinist dirigisme and allowed "horizontal pressure to pervade Soviet life, stamping out minor transgressions" (96). The use of "socialness" between the 1950s and 1970s stressed "that it has eyes and is always watching" (97). Yet, Kapitolina Fedorova's groundbreaking work with the National Corpus of Russian Language has demonstrated that the period 2004–2009 came in third after 1899–1917 and 1918–1927 in the frequency with which the term *obshchestvennyi* was employed. And the term *obshchestvennost'* experienced its "golden days" as it appeared more frequently than ever in the 2000s (82). Kharkhordin suggests that the frequency with which the term has reemerged recently may reflect "pro-government efforts to either stigmatize and tame potential public protest, or—more frequently—to ritualistically appeal to the wider, and thus inactive, socialness of the country or the world" (101). But this "social" is nothing but a by-product of atomized and politically apathetic individuals acting for themselves rather than the result of "genuinely political" and conscious citizenry acting together freely (103).

The fourth chapter, intriguingly titled "A Society of Common-ism" defines *iuris consensus* more thoroughly as "a co-sentiment on legal matters that develops when the citizens are ensured equal access to the production, application, and enforcement of law" that enables them to "deliberate together on matters of common life and on rules that bind them" (117). Applying this condition to contemporary Russian reality, Kharkhordin examines two St. Petersburg civic action groups—The Rescue Group (*Gruppa Spaseniia*, 1986–1990) and Living City (*Zhivoi gorod*, 2006–2009)—and concludes that the latter's influence was limited because it failed "to gain access to the powers that be or to nonchalant city residents" in its aim to mobilize public support to preserve St. Petersburg's architectural legacy (119). In an extensive historical-linguistic excursion, Kharkhordin explains the obstacles that civil society faces in Russia by returning to Catherine the Great's time, when the empress both nurtured *le public*, but

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also treated it "as an object" and made clear that it was not to challenge her authority (139). Kharkhordin identifies Konstantin Aksakov's 1857 newspaper article as another turning point in the suppression of public spirit, since the author compared *publika* to the *narod* in favor of the latter: "*Publika* despises *narod*; *narod* forgives *publika*. . . . *Publika* is of a passing quality, *narod* is eternal" (150). In their search for an underlying unity to a socially and culturally stratified Russia, the Slavophiles emphasized *sobornost′* or communion—as opposed to social action—as "the highest morality and Christian truth" and "the manifestation of a certain national spirit" (151). The 1840s thus left Russia with what Kharkhordin aptly calls a "gloomy alternative"—"going along with the *publika* of pulp fiction-reading mediocrities of Bulgarin or with the socially active force of furious zealot critics wishing to establish a true commonwealth on earth" (154). Hence Russia's failure to evolve "a register of public language and an infrastructure of public access to law production and law enforcement" that could work in the twenty-first century (157).

To explore contemporary Russians' modes of communication, Kharkhordin dedicates the fifth chapter to exploring self-cognition and self-fashioning. He distinguishes the confessional from the penitential "methods of self-cognition and self-evaluation" in Christianity (162), and relates the penitential form prevalent in Russia to its Orthodox traditions and the Soviet legacy that imitated them by creating a "saintly image of a builder of Communism" which society "required in everyday life and maintained by a horizontally structured system of surveillance primarily involving your neighbors and colleagues" (163). Kharkhordin uses opinion-based research on contemporary Russian technopreneurs to demonstrate that the penitential form of self-cognition emphasizes the recognition of colleagues over bringing "inventions and innovations to the stage of commercialization and mass production"—something that western Christian "practices of private confession and direct communication with God" encourage as they nurture and reward individual success (164). The "most common method of self-knowledge" among post-Soviet technopreneurs, Kharkhordin argues, is therefore "self-recognition through others, which partly reproduces in the post-Soviet environment Soviet practices of revealing a self by deeds" (169).

With the intriguing subtitle "Is Russia Doomed to Creativity?" (198), the sixth and final chapter explores the role of inspired insight and the euphoria of creativity among contemporary Russian technopreneurs. Comparative sociological research in Russia (and three other countries) has revealed that although agnostic and religiously relativist, Russian technopreneurs privilege "the world of inspiration over the demands of technological or market efficiency" (201). Unlike their Taiwanese and South Korean colleagues, "Russian respondents emphasized work's inspirational nature as its main feature, and stressed big challenges worthy of eternity as the key underlying motive that impelled them to do business in the high-tech sector" (213). The "quasi-experience of grace" (230) through creativity thus eclipses methodical commercialization in the Russian tech industry whose representatives, Kharkhordin argues, exemplify the "proximity to the Divine" that the broader Russian population "residually embod[ies]" and that "stands in the way" of rising "from the level of common things to the level of *res publica*" (242).

In his Conclusion, Kharkhordin argues that in contemporary Russia the "hybrid common-social realm still largely precludes the formation of genuine public life in the sense of both the classic republicanism of Cicero and the modern republicanism of Hannah Arendt," but qualifies this by adding that "the resulting situation is not hopeless, since we see elements of *res publica* developing" (243). The "yearning of some Russians to be part of a grand reconstruction of the universe" can still nurture republicanism if it "could just be purged of the huge Soviet *hubris*" that aimed to "replace the Creator" by following Arendt's advice to replace "tinkering with eternity" with

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"a striving for immortality" in the form of leaving a legacy of public achievements (249) or, as Weber put it, "salvation-through-good-works" (253). This is what brings the author to call for the reactivation of "secular and enlightened communication to reveal a mortal character whose deeds are worthy of earthly immortality" (253). But this would mean abandoning the deep structures of Orthodox self-identity that have made such a powerful comeback in post-Soviet society. Kharkhordin leaves intriguingly open the question of how long it would take to overcome a thousand-year-old psychological legacy and whether it can be done at all.

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In Search of Russian Modernism. By Leonid Livak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. ix, 375 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. $54.95, hard bound.
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"Russian modernism," to borrow a line from Vladimir Nabokov, one of its practitioners, is a phrase that means nothing without quotes. As Leonid Livak shows in this engaging study, even "modernism" itself, without the geographical specifier, is problematic. Although now widely used in scholarship, the term was accepted only hesitantly by Anglo-American writers and only reluctantly applied in France and Germany. In the Russian context its use is further complicated by questions of dates (beginning, end) and geography (the divide between Soviet and émigré communities).

Livak comes to the pursuit of this elusive target well-qualified, having earlier published major studies of Russian émigré literature in the European modernist context, *How It was Done in Paris: Russian Émigré Literature and French Modernism* (2003) and *Russian Émigrés in the Intellectual and Literary Life of Interwar France: A Bibliographical Essay* (2010). The occasion for setting off on this new search is the "Copernican revolution" (2) in our understanding of *fin-de-siècle* and early twentieth-century literature made possible by the opening of archives in the post-Soviet era, and with that the opportunity we now have to depoliticize our discussions of Russian modernism and provide an account which transcends the "pre-Soviet/Soviet/ant-Soviet" paradigm historically dominant in the field (3). Livak's approach this time is to treat Russian modernism not as a series of canonical works but as a "culture," which he defines, following Clifford Geertz, as an "evolving system of values, ideas, practices, and conventions. . .suffusing human experience with meaning" (7). What emerges from this perspective is the "story of a self-identified and self-conscious community" (22) united in particular by a "sense of staring into a spiritual, cultural, and social chasm between past and present" (9). In a further revisionist move, Livak treats his object of study as a "cartography" (25), asking not so much "what" was Russian modernism but "where" and "when" it was.

One consequence of herding disparate works and movements into a single culture is to erase otherwise useful boundaries, such as that between "modernism" (which promoted art for its own sake, as a self-sufficient value) and the "avant-garde" (which sought to displace or destroy "art" as an autonomous cultural institution—to use a distinction promoted in Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*). Another perspective lost in a synthesizing approach—for which there must at the end of the day exist a unified phenomenon in the midst of the chaos of competing labels and affiliations—is the awareness that there might have existed multiple "modernisms," each of which had distinctive emphases qualifying it, in effect, as a subspecies (an

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