

October 12, 2014

N.N. Smirnov, Director
St. Petersburg Institute of History, RAN
Russian Federation

Dear Nikolai Nikolaevich,

My heart grieves deeply for our dear friend and colleague, Rafail Sholomovich, whose passing is such an irreplaceable loss. For those of us from the “far abroad” who have come to regard the Institute of History as our scholarly home in Russia, R.S. was truly an inspiration. His capacious intellect, his radiant warmth, his generous scholarly council, and his prodigious energy, were astonishing. So was his remarkable scholarship. From our first acquaintance some 25 years ago, his sheer zest brought constant pleasure. His ability to quietly endure great hardship also brought deep admiration and respect. Rafail Sholomovich might wave off such sentiments by insisting that the essence of history itself is great loss and great sadness just as it is the great and treasured pleasure of friendship and collegiality, but some historical moments change our accustomed ways of being. This is one of them.

I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome and strong support Rafail Sholomovich always offered, for his wonderful tales and story-telling, and for the remarkable insights he offered all over so many years about Imperial Russia’s struggle for reform. I speak for all of my American colleagues who have long admired him in saying that historians everywhere have lost a truly great colleague. Rafail Sholomovich Ganelin was an historian’s historian, a scholar’s scholar, a great figure in the Institute’s own historical past and present who is, and will always be, greatly missed.

Sincerely,



William G. Rosenberg