



Thinking of Igor Zelljadt, Professor emeritus of Russian, reminds me of a passage in T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*: "Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch." These lines could almost have been spoken by Igor himself: He taught Russian; he was born in Riga (Latvia); German was his language – one of them. Igor was a European, that is a Northern Central European from the Baltic region. Somehow he was immune to the bane of nationalism. He spoke all the languages understood in that region and was thoroughly conversant with its multinational history and politics.

This does not mean that Igor was an old-world type, part of a vanishing breed. If anything, his presence was rejuvenating. When he first joined the Faculty, many of us thought of him as "Prinz Igor", a youthful fellow with blond hair sporting a bright red scarf, very visible in Northampton's streets in his open sports car.

At Smith College it was impossible for Igor to remain a bachelor. He married Margaret Skiles, a member of the German Department at the College who became the highly esteemed class dean of many student generations and who gave him two lovely daughters, Katja and Lisa. An exemplary family man, he took intense interest in their education.

Igor's academic presence in the College was significant. Russian was a new field in a college long hospitable to Greek and Latin, French, German, Italian and Spanish. He gave a grand course surveying the masters of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature, and also a pioneering seminar on the History of Slavic Languages. Meanwhile he read newspapers

in various modern languages so as to keep up with political and cultural developments in his turbulent part of Europe Think only of the fate of East Prussia! About all this he enjoyed the conversations with students, colleagues, and friends. He made for us all not a wall but a door between West and East.

Conversations with Igor were silenced by illness about three years ago. But now we remember them with pleasure. And I find other words in the Waste Land that suit his case. The passage I quoted from it earlier ends with the line “In the mountains, there you feel free”. Now Igor, I like to think, is free, really free, our friend and colleague Igor.