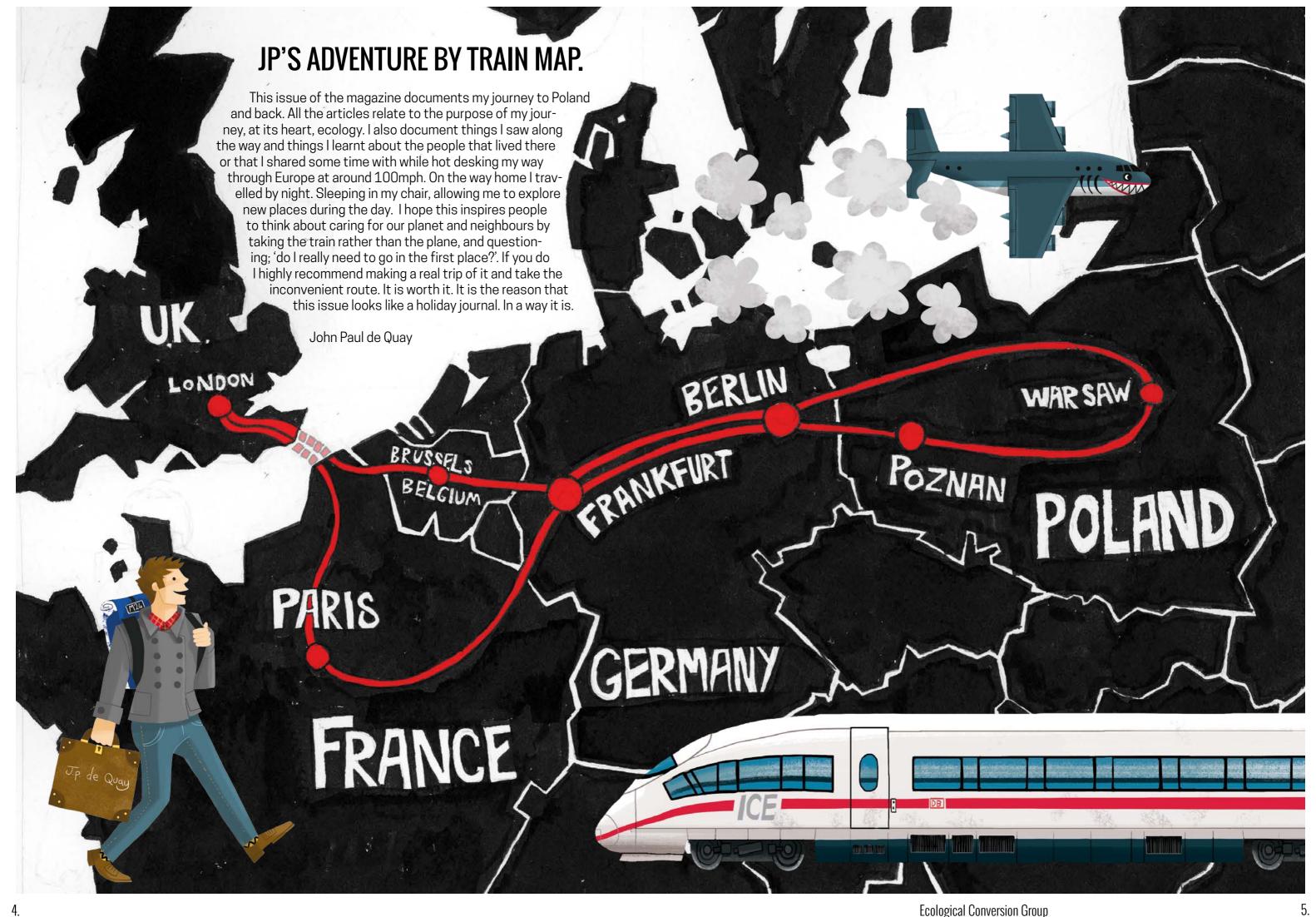




FOOD WASTE, POLITICS & CLIMATE CHANGE





THE MANY BENEFITS OF TRAVELLING BY TRAIN.

In October I set out on an excellent adventure...

I had been invited to talk at a conference in Poznań on the effects of food waste on the worlds poorest through climate change. I was to speak at one of four simultaneous conferences across four major Polish Cities. The conference celebrated St Francis Sunday and aimed to start a discussion in Poland on care of our planet. As the first of these St Francis Sunday celebrations the subject was to focus on the work of Caritas Poland's waste food redistribution scheme and also to support a bill being passed by the government to prevent food being wasted.

Having an Interrail pass in my hand and a vague idea that I needed to get to Frankfurt the first

I had been invited to talk at a conference in Poznań on the effects of food waste on the worlds poorest through climate change. I was to speak at one of four simultaneous conferences across four did not have.

Why did I travel by train? I felt my words on climate change would be diminished had I flown in for a 20 minute presentation. The irony would be lost on no one. I wanted to demonstrate the seriousness of our current climate crisis, and also to present that there was an alternative to flying. I also wanted to show that even though it may be more expensive last minute (and takes four times longer), there were benefits to this train madness.

Train madness benefit 1: Less greenhouse gasses.

578.9 kg C02

TRAIN IS WINNER! 65% less C02

Figure 1. My Return Trip to Poland

*This figures were calculated using the Ecopassenger calculator from the Institute for energy and environmental research Heidelberg. https://www.ifeu.de/en/ Their methodology in calculation is available on the following link: https://ecopassenger.hafas.de/hafas-res/download/Ecopassenger_Methodology_Data.pdf. The CO₂ emissions of the plane takes into account the additional climate effects of other GHG emissions, especially for emissions in high altitudes (nitrogen oxides, ozone, water, soot, sulphur). The electricity mix of the railways takes into account green electricity certificates.

I have estimated that i have used 203.8kg of CO₂ rather than the 578.9 kg had I flown*. This proves it is possible to radically alter our carbon footprint, even further if we are able to use the free technology at our finger tips had video conferencing been possible. My journey although a dramatic drop in

CO₂ emissions seemed to be hampered by Poland and Germany generating much of their electricity using coal. here are some other figures generated using the same calculations to demonstrate how for short journeys (within a days travel), you can make a huge difference by taking the train.



Figure 2. Comparisons of popular holiday journeys.

Why is reducing your Carbon footprint so important?



'The new IPCC report states that we only have 12 years to hit our targets if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C above pre industrial levels. This means...

- Pollinating insects will be half as likely to lose half their habitats
- 10% of coral reef may survive rather than 1%
- 10 million less refugees by preventing an additional 10cm sea level rise by 2100.
- Food scarcity becomes less of a problem for millions of fewer people.

We cannot afford to wait for our leaders or technology and should tackle the biggest carbon emissions in our lives. These are usually flying and driving, eating meat and dairy (try meat once a week) and limiting the amount of clothes we buy. It is tough but good things will come of it, for you and others.

Best Regards. Edd'

Train madness benefit 2: An excellent adventure.

ing us closer to people, witnessing the lives of oth- find people to chat to. Not only was the language ers first hand and also noticing the small details barrier not a problem (everyone seems to speak often missed by taking the more convenient route. embarrassingly good English), but everyone was Had I flown would I have sat on a bridge in Berlin as keen to help their fellow passengers feel at ease the sun went down watching giant bubbles, a light and make sure I made my connections. It was like show, some incredible buskers and chat for hours we were all on one crazy adventure together. with complete strangers? Probably not.

The inconvenient route can be beneficial in bring- There was not one leg of the journey that I did not

1. Two men enjoy getting some exercise on pedal powered recharge stations while they await their connections. 2. Ecological education seemed to be promoted positively through the use of ecological gardens in public spaces. 3. Taking the train allows you to wander in the sunshine when you have a wait before a connection.























THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A fundamental problem concerning climate change is the word "ecology". People have little comprehension of what it means, yet everyone seems expert enough to assume it's political leanings.

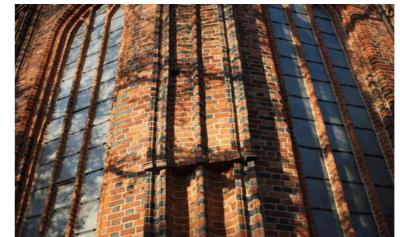
The familiar figure of St Pope John Paul II, Poland's subject after once being approached by a young own Karol Józef Wojtyła greets you on cathedral island. Lines of seminarians with their albs march across the road to the cathedral; a 10th century building and the first cathedral built in Poland. It is simple, solid and beautiful. There is a real reverence in mass.

This morning I am presenting a short talk about the effect of food waste on the worlds poorest through climate change. I was aware that the subject of climate change in Poland was a political

Pole who asked me whether he should listen to Pope Francis or the Bishops of the Polish Church on the issue.

The talk preceding mine was delivered by what I am led to believe is a very eminent Polish priest. He laid down three, wordy, theological theories on the relationships between God, ourselves and nature. His talk stated that man and nature were not of comparable value. Man is superior. To compare the two would be shamanistic. I couldn't be sure

















but it looked like climate change deniers had got in the game early as he said very little about food waste, Saint or Pope Francis. I was interested to see how my presentation would go down, especially as there was one slide which clearly stated in big bold lettering 'NATURE = NEIGHBOUR'.

My talk seemed to go down well with the few people had turned up, or so I thought. I presented the idea that in order to be disciples we had to live like superheroes through embracing St Pope John Paul Il's ecological conversion; whereby the effects of our encounter with Christ become evident in the world around us. A call to radically change our lives considering our globalised worlds workings in order to love our neighbour no matter how far removed. We do this by being mindful of our integral ecology, or simply respecting nature so that we may care for our neighbours who like us; depend on it for our everyday needs. I also presented the idea that it was perhaps impossible once you consider the workings of the modern world to be a christian and not care about climate change, and to deny human caused climate change would be simply gambling with the lives of others. So far so good...

Time for the panel discussion on the Governments bill to stop food waste in Poland. Two panelists in introducing themselves announce they want to be superheroes too. So far so good...

One young audience member asks a question concerning the bill and climate change. The panel instantly becomes hostile. One panellist involved with the government bill announces that the climate has always been changing; 'The Baltic sea froze once. Human caused climate change is basically just a theory' he says. 'We will do something about climate change only once we have a catastrophe'. The next panellist announces he used to be in the coal business. Again climate change is brushed aside with hostility. 'It's all about coal which was once wood a long time ago'. He is now in organic chicken farming. He uses the opportunity to ask what is the government doing about the chipped eggs that he can't sell because of a government policy?

At the end of the day they all had good points about their areas of speciality. They all had their own "chipped eggs". It seemed that they could not see past these "eggs" to the bigger picture. They

were well meaning but perhaps angry at the policy that would be forced upon them with climate change. That all these government incentives were perhaps punishing them with extra fines.

Most people had made their way home by the time I was approached by a man who although seemed to be sympathetic to the cause, came to warn me that perhaps I would like to be more sensitive with some wordings. It seems my NATURE = NEIGHBOUR had caused a stir after all. And why should it? I had explained what I meant by it at the time; We are all connected through ecology, therefore whatever you do to nature you do to neighbour. It seems fairly simple to me.

It appears the problem is the same the world over; the assigning of nature or environment to the political left.

'I am a conservative' a man tells me. I ask him what exactly he means by that.

'I don't want to say' he replies. Eager to know more I sit with him for a chat. He is an incredibly pleasant, gentle and intellectual man. I got no further on the subject on conservatism, however the "dangerous left" that I seemed to represent was eagerly discussed. It made me wonder if being conservative would be to cling to traditional values, it really depends how far back in time you go. I could be conservative to Holocene man. However living in a hut with a paleo diet would surely not be far from the ideal of many of the leftist residents of 2010's Shoreditch. So what is it that Poland's "conservatives" are trying to hang on to? And what is this threat from the dangerous left?

On further discussion in Poland and back home; it appears that nature is a dangerous lefty subject because of it's associations with vegans. The assumption that all vegans believe that humans and animals are equal in importance is in contradiction to the churches teaching in that we were given dominion over all of nature. However, if we were given dominion over all of nature, then surely if we destroy nature or diminish it in any way we diminish the very nature of our own authority. I am not vegan myself but surely not harming God's creatures is a good thing? The other problem is the misunderstanding of dominion. Through being in dominion of nature we are stewards, protectors of God's handiwork. The difference between dominion and domination is understanding the workings of nature in order to care for it. If you were left in



all the levers did before you started pulling them, otherwise we injure people on the production line. Ecology is this "factory". Our lives are it's levers. I do. I trust the scientific community because they The workings are nature.

Veganism seemed to be a sticking point. Is veganism a sin now? Or are we just making prejudice assumptions that all vegans are unwashed, socialist, pro-abortionist, LGBT activists? By prejudging people we end up being politically opposed to things that can not possibly have a political agenda of their own. In doing so we create a schism. It is time we stop putting labels on things that have no political agenda. A fundamental problem concerning climate change is the word "ecology". People have little comprehension of what it means. yet everyone seems expert enough to assume it's political leanings. 'After all climate change is

charge of a factory you would want to know what just a theory' I am told. To some extent is not our speculative theology on dominion? I would trust the church knowing infinitely more about God than individually and collectively know more about climate change than I do. It comes down to faith on both counts. The two are not contradictory, on the contrary; they are misguided without each other.

> 'Faith without action is useless' writes James, and in order to make just decisions we need to be informed. This is why ecology is so important. It the infrastructure by which we become capable of reflecting God's love for us on others. Globalisation has increased our capacity to love through extending our ecological networks. We can now live our lives in a way that ensures love for neighbours we will never meet, yet are nonetheless connected to our own lives.

1. I deliver my talk with the help of my excellent translator. 2. A waste food cookery workshop at the conference provided lunch. 3. People of all ages sign the petition to stop food waste. 4. Myself with an advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (he wants to be an ecologically converted superhero).











Ecology is the one thing that should be impossible to put on the political spectrum. However if ecology is seen as something to dominate, then others down the ecological chain will surely suffer regardless of their own political agenda. Ecology is indiscriminate.

I left Poland with more questions than I did before. The biggest of which surrounded St Pope John Paul II. People seem to love John Paul and intensely dislike Francis, when all Francis is doing is highlighting the teachings of theology of the body and the ecological conversion that the world ignored the first time around. Is it just cultural pride that a man from their country became Pope? He is of course a political hero who helped end the Soviet oppression, recognised for the walls he brought next year's St Francis Sunday conference.

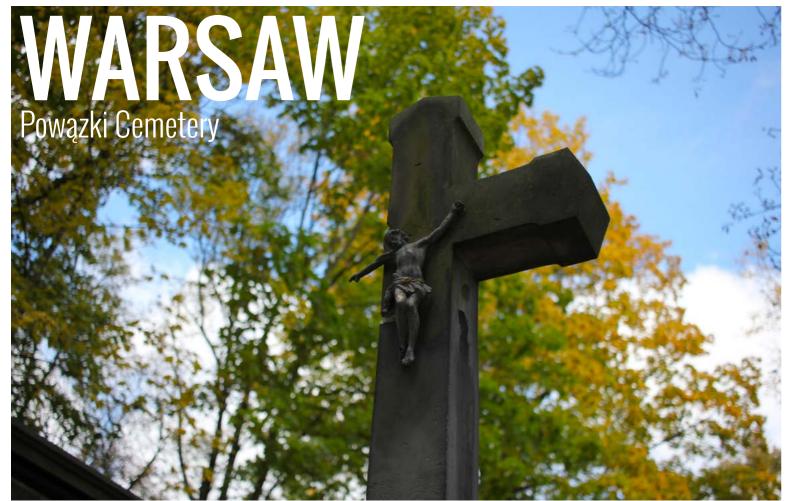
down, yet ignored for the bridges he built. He was loved as a great man of humility, of humour, a man who loved the outdoors and engaging with the young, a man who was passionate about science and where it will lead us on our guest to understand and love God a little more, yet his teachings, his greatest legacy seem to be ignored. The things he was loved for seem to be the same things that many in the Church seems to label "the dangerous

Although not well attended, the conference in Poznań was an important Occassion. It started a new dialogue out in the open. It was a platform to raise opinions and get to understand one another's problems a little better. I have high hopes for

1. I deliver my second talk in Warsaw to Caritas Poland's anti food waste volunteers, giving them faith based reasons to tackle food waste in the home. 2. My new friends at the Global Catholic Climate Movement in Warsaw.



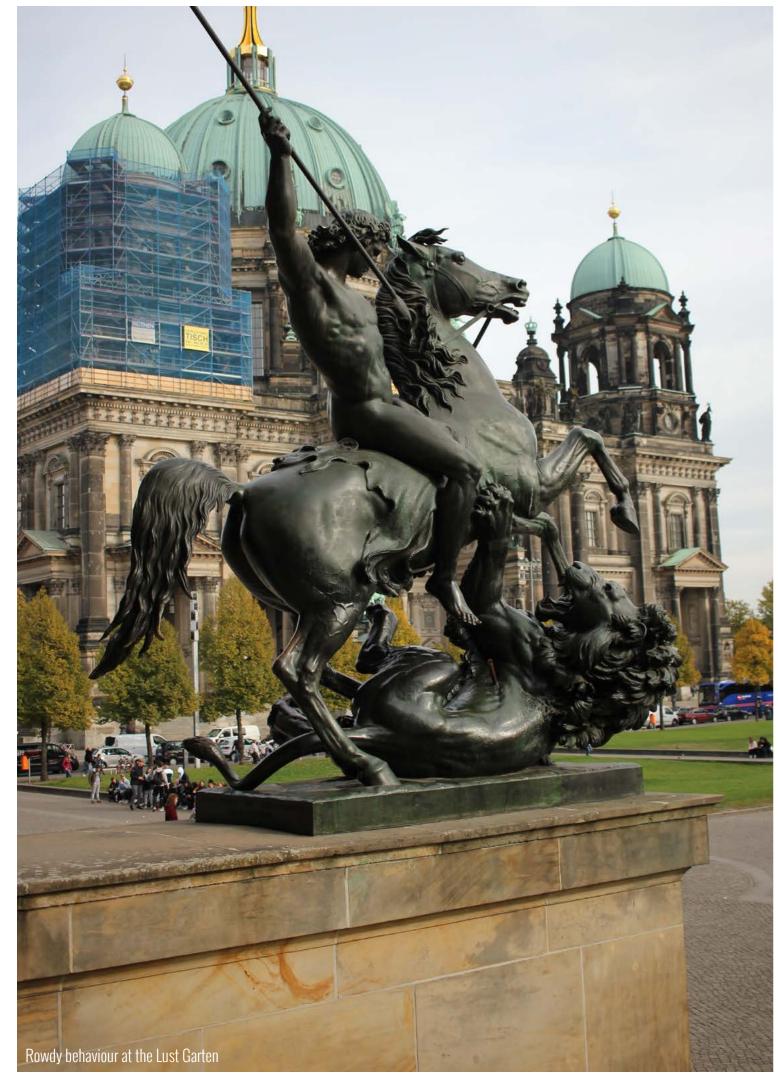












BERLIN

I find some powerful imagery. Bare chested warriors hunt lions that viciously cling to their terrified horses. Some tourists climb up to the statues. Posing for photos; they attempt to become one with the dramatic scene. Now they are topless, flexing their muscles, yet they are shying away from the public while doing this. This shyness combined with the professional looking photoshoot tells me that this is perhaps not done with a sense of comic irony. Juxtaposed to this I find a man that resembles an older Ringo Star combined with Leonard Nimoy in what I can only assume was a teleporter accident (believe me this is a compliment). He is not topless, flexing muscles or fighting nature. He simply sits amongst the crows

and sparrows and is obviously comforted by their presence. He gives me permission to take his photo, yet unlike our tragic topless hero he does not ask to see his picture, he is simply content feeding his neighbours.

My journey has unearthed many reminders of Europe's political past that have no doubt helped form ecology's leftist associations. It is no surprise that there are those in Poland and the UK who refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of climate change because of this. There are reminders of suffering across my journey. Coal mines left to ruin, bullet holes in Berlin buildings and of course; the Berlin wall.





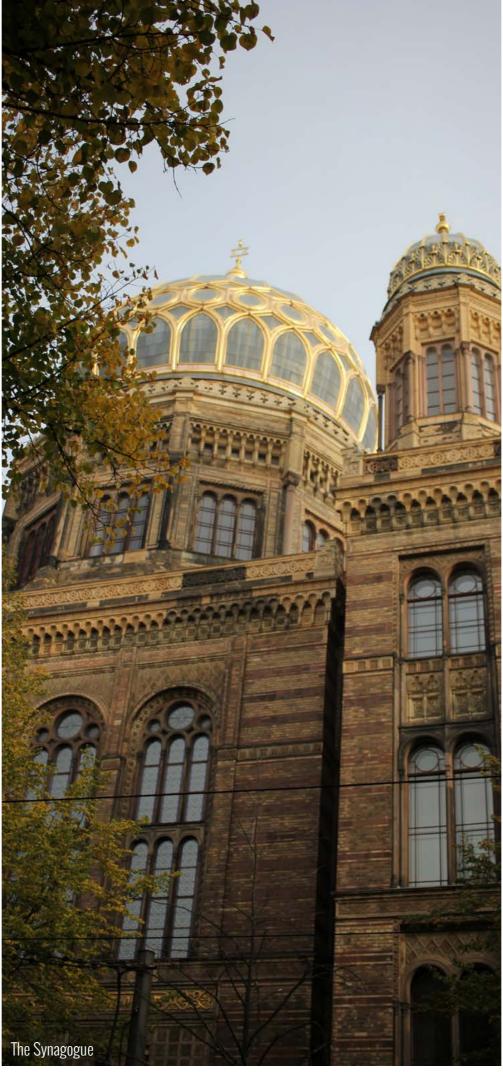












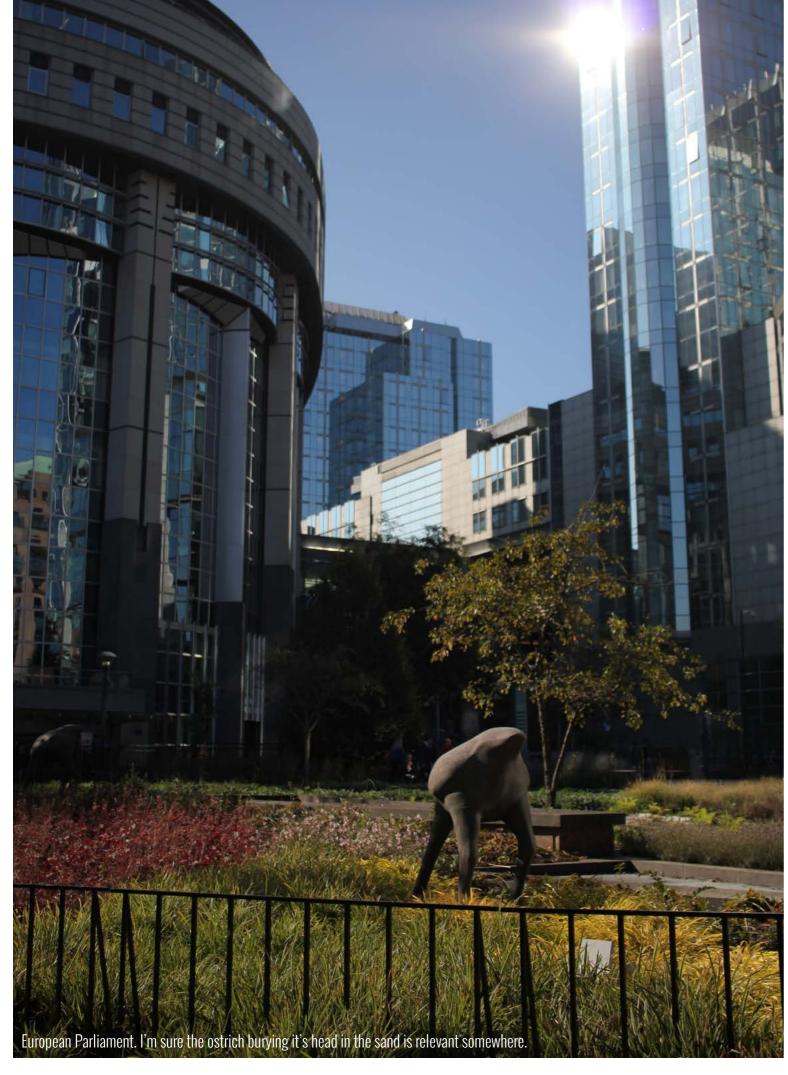


















brothers, both polymaths, the younger: Alexander was a keen explorer and a Genius. He came up with the idea that humans are inseparably bound to nature and that changes to the climate or damage to an ecosystem could have far reaching effects across our planet.

The Humbolt brothers expansive knowledge of an array of subjects allowed them to piece things together. Something I felt was missing from the debate in Poland. Being blinded by your own specialisation or problem means that others views are not tolerated, perhaps why we have our own problems in the UK which led to Brexit. Another wall. St Pope John Paul II was another polymath of sorts.

Berlin University is named after the Humbolt Although he did not have a wealth of degrees, he had active interests in God, science, nature and the lives of others. He often went camping, with youth groups, he engaged in debate about the beginning of the universe with Steven Hawkin. The man engaged with life, which clearly shows in his church writings. These often centred around relationships, with God, people and planet. How we should engage in these relationships in a way that respects the dignity of every living thing, so as not to simply use these relationships for our own self-

BRUSSELS

It is time to go back home. Outside the EU Parliament stands a final reminder of Europe's past division. Another section of the Berlin wall. It sits next to another section of wall, a living wall of high tech enabled moss, designed to trap particulates, be self watering, generate electricity, look beautiful and convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. This is no longer a wall. This is an ecological bridge, between ourselves, nature and neighbour. I'm going to head back to England now...

before I need a visa to get back in.

'YOU HAVE TO TOLERATE ALI THE PEOPLE THAT YOU HATE. **IM NOT IN LOVE WITH YOU...**

THAT AGAINST YOU'.

Juxtapozed with U: Super Furry Animals, 2001

(see

