

The Generation Game (?)

In the EU referendum last year, 73% of the 18 - 24 age group voted to remain; 62% of the next group (25 - 34), also voted to remain.

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, 60% of those aged 65+ voted to leave, as did 57% of the 55 - 64 group.

So - the generation that will feel the effects of Brexit most have had their futures dictated to them - to a certain degree - by the generation that may feel them least.

Is there any sense in this?

There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a parliament, or any description of men, or any generation of men, in any country, possessed of the right or the power of binding and controlling posterity to the "end of time" or of commanding for ever how the world shall be governed, or who shall govern it; Every age and generation must be free to act for itself, in all cases, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.

Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 1791

Talking to people in Cuba in February of this year, it quickly became obvious that attitudes to the revolution, to Fidel Castro, and to the future, varied according to the generation of the Cuban. That generation that actually fought in the revolution are now largely gone (Raul Castro will be 88 when he steps down next year); the next generation, that grew up with the revolution - so now in their 50s and 60s - don't forget the hardships that they suffered, but appear to be largely supportive of the achievements of the revolution, and tend to blame the Americans for their grievances, rather than blame their government. The younger generation, especially those now in their 20s who grew up during *the special period* of the 1990s, feel that Fidel Castro's stubbornness has held back their chances for development..... but even they don't want the Americans back!

A 50 year old shop owner in Havana told us:

We must not interfere; the youngsters must be allowed to make their own mistakes, all we should do is just hope that they learn from them.

What is there in British politics for our generation of youngsters? The main political parties tend to follow only short-term policies ----- the pursuit of power takes precedence over long-term planning.

Promoting the extension of Heathrow airport will be good for "business", we are told - but it's clearly not going to be good for the climate.

When our politicians seem to be so little concerned about the well-being of the next generation, can we blame them when they turn away from politics in disgust?