

There is a vacuum in our politics. Who will fill it?

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As some readers will know, Danny Blanchflower and I (he, at one time of the Bank of England monetary policy committee) have sometimes referred to ourselves as the Mile End Road economists.

The Mile End Road left the City of London to the east. A mile out, the world was a very different place. It was, amongst other things, where the Peasant's Revolt came to an end.

These days it is, amongst other things, home to Queen Mary, University of London. I was there yesterday taking about the future of water supply in the UK, with others with opinion on this issue.

I took this photo on the walk in:



The old merchant's house contrasts with the modern street.

On the way back towards King's Cross, I went by bus, as I often prefer to do. This was the view:



The divide between the City and the Mile End Road is still massive. The centuries have changed little in that sense. The money focussed world of one is replaced by that of the trader, the street stall, and the multitude of activities supporting the City in which working class people are engaged to let it function.

With the docks nearby, this has always been an area where migrants have been commonplace. The established hierarchies have always been challenged by the constant flux of people and peoples, coming and going.

This is a reminder that we still live in a deeply divided country. Some have the trappings of security and wealth. Others do not. But without the labour of those on the Mile End Road the City could never have functioned. It probably still can't. Not that the City has noticed. It treats the Mile End Road with contempt.

That is the reason for identifying with it.

That is especially true now that Labour has sided with the City and not the Mile End Road, to whom its loyalty should belong.

We live in a dangerous country where there is no major English political party seeking to represent the worker, the dispossessed, the poor, the migrant and those in flux.

There is a vacuum in our politics. Who will fill it?