

# MOBILEBAY

## LABOUR JOURNAL

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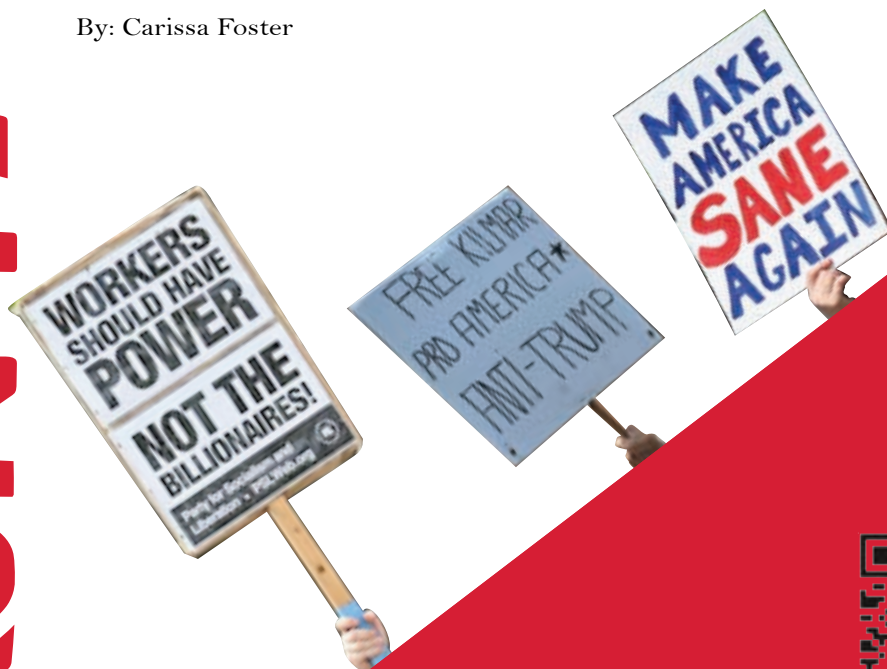
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# GROWING TIDE IN THE BAY AREA

By: Viktor Zaltys and Alex Ames



On April 19 the Bay Area broke its record for the largest protest in Mobile history since the 1960s civil rights movement. The previous record, set just two weeks ago by the Hands Off protest, saw 400-500 demonstrators march through downtown Mobile, according to organizers. The No Kings protest saw at least a 40% increase in participation, with nearly 700 protestors showing up to Mardi Gras Park.

“When it comes to any movement it tends to start off really strong in the beginning and then diminish in numbers, so honestly seeing a big return brings my spirit back to life,” said one of the organizers.

This group has seemingly found a way to get the local population involved. While the first protest

brought only 100-200 people to Government Plaza, demonstrations now run as a well oiled machine with official crowd counters, local news reporting, and volunteers passing out water bottles and snacks as well as documenting the protest for the public record by surveying nearly 80 protestors.

Interesting trends emerged once the data was laid out on the spreadsheets. The first thing that stood out was that while almost everyone had voted in the past election, 57% (45 out of 79) of those interviewed stated that they hadn’t participated in past political action. This is also reflected with the organizers of the protest - the four organizers interviewed only started to seek ways to get more politically involved after the 2024 election. The protest was held entirely by first-time organizers and



**“The theater of politicking isn’t for the proletariat... I say that’s something we can change.”**

achieved a high turnout of first-time protestors, which further exposes the discontent many Mobilians feel - after all, 87%, (69 out of 79) of the protestors interviewed said that they are seeking more ways to get involved and look forward to future protests.

This appetite for activism is something the organizers are seeking to develop. Throughout the speeches, speakers addressed how they are not just there to fight fascism, but to help protestors find organizations through which they can continue to act.

“The most important thing is building a community and giving people a place where they feel comfortable,” said one of the organizers. “In this day and age, it’s really hard to find somewhere where you belong and to find people who are going to band with you.”

This approach helps address one of the biggest problems political movements can run into: despair from feeling unheard that ultimately leads to political apathy. While the most common answers to questions about the biggest concerns that the protestors had were fears over checks and balances, immigrants’ right to due process, and America’s growing descent into fascism, the speakers attempted to draw attention to how the participants can act locally to affect change.

These included Jeff and Elijah, who represented Mobile DSA and PSL respectively. The two speakers addressed how the erosion of working class representation and rights led the U.S. to elect Trump.

“The theater of politicking isn’t for the proletariat,” said Jeff, pointing out how Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination was a direct result of his campaign for workers’ rights, “I say that’s something we can change.”

Elijah gave an extensive laundry list of services to student communities that would be removed with the

Trump administration’s dissolution of the Department of Education, from providing food and ESL assistance for international students to transportation for legal hearings. They offered scathing criticism of the United States’ support of genocide in Gaza and taking of political prisoners Mahmoud K̄hālil and Rumeysa Ozturk before calling out to the working class: “Workers make the world run, therefore workers should run the world.”

The most powerful speech on the topic of Palestine was given by Ahmed, the representative for Mobile for Palestine, who connected the lack of essentials for working class Americans to the billions of dollars the U.S. government supplies to fund the genocide in Gaza - we have much more in common with the suffering Palestinians than the billionaires of the United States.

If these new faces to Mobile organizing are successful, the energy of that vast majority of protestors who are interested in doing more can be channeled through groups like Mobile Bay DSA, PSL, or Blue Wave. Mobile could find itself heading towards a historic political shift, possibly laying the groundwork necessary to turn Alabama as a whole blue.



# OUR LABOR CREATES ALL LABOR DAY SALES ON THE ORIGINS OF MAY DAY

You're probably familiar with Labor Day as a U.S. federal holiday in September where some people get a day off of work - unless, of course, you don't work for the federal government - there's no actual legal requirement for employers to give anyone a day off. Instead, a celebration of workers' rights has been eagerly co-opted into Labor Day sales and three day weekend deals. After all, our labor creates all wealth, so enjoy 10% off the goods that you helped make. And yet, Labor Day wasn't always capitalist, nor was it was it always in September.

In the 1880s, labor movements in the U.S. became increasingly powerful and well organized, pushing for rights such as higher wages, improved working conditions, and limited hours. Then, on May 1, 1886 a nationwide strike for an 8-hour work day began, organized by the American Federation of Labor (still in operation today as the AFL-CIO). Three days later, on May 4th, violence broke out in Chicago when an unknown individual threw a bomb into the crowd, killing at least 11 people and wounding dozens more. This incident, known as the Haymarket Affair, became a symbol of the international struggle for workers' rights.

Following the Haymarket Affair, in 1889 the International Socialist Congress designated May 1st as International Workers Day to commemorate the incident and the lasting effect it had on the labor movement in the U.S. and worldwide.

At the same time, a push for a similar holiday in the U.S. was rapidly gaining popularity in the midst of budding anti-communist and red scare sentiment. In an effort to distance himself from the socialist roots of May 1st while still appeasing popular demand, President Grover Cleveland chose the first Monday of September as the date for the new U.S. holiday.

Optics? Maybe. Effective? Maybe not. But make no mistake - September was chosen as opposed to the original holiday of May Day in an effort to disconnect the meaning of a day meant to appreciate workers with the actual movement that pushed for workers' rights in the first place - labor unions, socialists, communists, and anarchists.

Today, we ask people to instead recognize the history May Day, specifically May 1st, has with labor movements, and what these vital movements for workers' rights mean to workers both around the world and right here in Alabama.

For example, one of the first instances of organized work stoppage in Alabama occurred at the Port of Mobile in 1867, where black dock workers and mill workers at Jewett's Mill organized a general strike for higher wages. Then, in 1934, more than a thousand longshoremen staged a walkout that culminated in a month-long strike against Mobile's large shipping interests.

On this May Day, I hope we keep a generous and courageous view of our own labor. I hope we can regard and celebrate this day without separating it from the movements and struggles of people who earnestly cared about their own work enough to fight for their liberation and the liberation of other people.

# THE SECOND FRONT

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RESURGENT RIGHT

By: Gracchus

Leading up to the 2024 election, one of the most frequently talked about polling statistics was the tidal wave of support for the Republican ticket from young white and latino men. While vocal misogyny was to be expected with a woman as the presidential candidate, as was with Clinton in 2016, the numerous victories of the Republicans in the 2024 election still surprised many. This support was contextualized by the aftermath of the election, with a majority of working class voters also favoring the Republican party (Financial Times; Circle).

A nationwide 2024 Gallup poll found immigration to be the top issue among all voters, while a 2024 Circle poll found economic issues to be the top concern among young voters, specifically. These were two of the three main talking points of Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric. His hardline stance on perceived illegal immigration and promises of tariff fueled economic warfare seemed to resonate with these to groups until recently.

New polling data published by the Pew Research Center would have readers believe that young, working class men who voted Republican now regret their decision, as Trump's approval rating falls to 41% and congressional approval

falls to a meager 12%. However, buried in the data is a far more interesting statistic. Disapproval of the current Republican led government is split largely by party affiliation. A majority of Republicans and Republican leaning people polled still hold that Trump can adequately run the government, especially on immigration (Pew). What is the continued appeal of MAGA conservatism to young men? Why has the Democratic left fallen flat with the working class?

Part of the answer can be observed in our own area. In 2024, Donald Trump carried Alabama with 64% of the popular vote. Statewide he carried 56% of the youth vote. He won Mobile county with 57% of the vote and Baldwin county with 78% of the vote, according to Politico. The solid south rings especially true here.

Are his economic and immigration policies benefiting his support base? Not in any substantive way. The population of Mobile and Baldwin have a rate of citizenship of 98% and 97% respectively (Data USA). Baldwin, being one of the fastest growing counties in Alabama, is reliant on the construction industry, particularly D.R. Horton. The construction industry is, in turn, reliant on immigrant labor via subcontractors. Mobile is reliant on its port,

which supports over 350,000 jobs and brings in \$98.3 billion state-wide, per Governor Ivey herself. Despite this, available data suggests that Trump's tariff war has reduced the amount of shipping received by Alabama's only major port (NBC).

So what is the appeal? The appeal of MAGA conservatism to young working class men today is the same appeal found in segregationist politics by young white men in the 19th and 20th centuries. The segregationist antics and rhetoric of George Wallace did more to entertain than benefit the white working class at the time. So also does the misogynistic and/or racist rhetoric and antics of Andrew Tate, Steven Crowder, Dennis Prager, Jordan Peterson, Marjorie Taylor Greene and Donald Trump entertain and energize young working class men today. They do not need economic security because they are safe from illegal immigrants, crazed feminists, and drag clad "groomers".

An entire generation of neoliberal economic policies has put genuine strain on the working classes, but instead of pursuing substantive policy the Republican party has chosen to pursue the pageantry of culture war. The recent rounds of ICE raids are not effective because they're actively bettering peoples'



lives. Rather, they are effective only as a spectacle, something to be gawked at at home and touted about when faced with criticism. The so-called “Liberation Day” was a simple publicity stunt. No thought was given to the broader implications of starting a trade war with our largest economic partner on the global stage, only that it would play well with his base. As evidence of this simply refer back to the discord sewn within the current administration by the tariff announcements. Combined with the constant babbling about “woke ideology” and dismantling DEI (rebranded from critical race theory), this culture war only serves to obscure the hidden Republican agenda of creating an illiberal democracy in the style of Orban’s Hungary or Bukele’s El Salvador (the resemblance of Bukele and Trump is truly astounding).

So then, what is the appeal of culture war to young working class men? The answer comes in two parts.

First, as stated before, part of the appeal is in superiority and safety. Segregationist politics distracted the white working classes of the Jim Crow era by giving them someone to look down on, instead of looking up to face their shared oppressors. Today, it is not

segregation but instead nativist, misogynistic, and anti-democratic rhetoric that gives working class men a new distraction. The hoarding of wealth by a small clique of self-interested business executives is not the cause of your financial and social insecurities. It is the immigrants that take your jobs, the feminists that ruin your relationships, the LGBTQ+ community that indoctrinates your children, and the liberal Democrats who hijack that government to make it all possible.

Secondly, part of the appeal lies in the new age of social media. Culture war makes good sound bites, entertaining clips, catchy phrases, and algorithm friendly content, not substantive policy initiatives. The MAGA media machine has used social media more effectively than any other political group of the 21st century. There is a parallel media landscape built and occupied entirely by far right publications. Turning Point USA, Breitbart, Twitter (via Elon Musk), Peterson Academy, The Epoch Times (the media organ of the Falon Gong cult), PragerU, and The Daily Wire are all well funded, well produced, and collaborative media efforts that have been effectively mobilized by MAGA conservatives in order to brand their movement as “cool” and with the times. Many Republicans even call themselves the new punks.



Where is the equivalent leftist content? Lost in the void of abstract thought. Where are the young firebrands and polemicists that will herald a resurgent left? Relegated to the dustbin of the modern imagination. Where is our Freeborn John? Among the ranks of lumpenproletariat Jacobin contributors and coffee house radicals. Granted, there are a few big names in leftist media, Hasan Piker (HasanAbi, et. al.), JT Chapman (First Thought, Second Thought & The Deprogram), Ben Thomas (Sisyphus55), the Meiselas brothers (MeidasTouch) et. al., but they are largely centered around individual personalities and rarely network in the same fashion as, for instance, the “Daily Wire - PragerU - Peterson Academy” connection.

In order to succeed we must make comparative and collaborative content networks, we must recast the leftist media sphere, and we must learn to propagandize. Yes, we must rehabilitate that dirtiest of words, propaganda, to effectively combat the resurgent right. In a political landscape dominated by performative politics, snake oil salesmen, and Christian fascists I see few other viable options.



# THE AESTHETICS OF PROGRESS

By: Viktor Zaltys

The City of Mobile's Town Hall on Gun Violence, held on April 12, 2025, began with the panel defining gun violence as a public health issue rather than solely a law enforcement or healthcare concern.

"Gun violence in Mobile is a public health issue, not just a matter for police or hospitals," stated Mobile Chief of Police William Jackson - a sentiment echoed throughout the evening by other panelists.

The speakers provided a wealth of information, blending data with empathetic rhetoric. Dr. Ashley Hogue, director of USA Health's Center for Healthy Communities and co-founder of Project INSPIRE, highlighted Mobile's elevated rates of penetrating trauma: 23% of trauma center patients fall into this category, compared to the national average of 10%. City Councilman C.J. Small addressed housing insecurity, noting that roughly 3,000 students in the municipality are affected.

After outlining the problems, the panel turned to potential solutions. Currently, Mobile employs 13 school resource officers (SROs) and one cybersecurity officer to monitor students for warning signs of potential violence. These officers focus on intervention and counseling rather than arrests. They are supported by a 'Digital Center' that tracks students' social media activity, with detectives following up on concerning posts. Additionally, the police department hosts half-day school events to educate students about safety and build trust with law enforcement.

Dr. Michaels, Mobile County's Health Officer, discussed broader public health efforts, including kiosks placed around the county offering free gun

locks and naltrexone (for opioid overdoses). He also mentioned a state-led initiative to develop a mental health app for Alabama residents.

However, attendees were dissatisfied with these measures. Many questioned why the proposed solutions prioritized enforcement over community-building, given the panel's insistence that gun violence is a public health issue.

The panel defended their approach, citing budget constraints. They noted that city council members even use personal funds to support programs like the Boys and Girls Club. Attendees countered by quoting Chief Jackson's earlier claim: "The city council has given the department unlimited funds to solve this issue." Jackson then clarified, "Well, it's not unlimited - we just know the limit we can ask for."

Critics also referenced Jackson's praise for the police cadet program, which he credited with putting him on the right path in high school, arguing that similar community-focused investments were lacking in the current plan.

Ultimately, while the panel's rhetoric aligned with a progressive, public health-oriented perspective, their proposed solutions leaned heavily on traditional policing. Their strategy - training officers to adopt a counseling mindset - seemed at odds with their own framing of the issue. For instance, SROs earn a starting salary of \$56,000 whereas hiring social workers (who are better suited for counseling) would cost less at \$54,000 - a puzzling choice if budget constraints are truly the barrier to more community centered solutions.



# WHAT IS POWER FOR ALABAMA DEMOCRATS

By: Viktor Zaltys



What is power? In a deep red state like Alabama, the Democratic Party having any power seems like a joke if you aren't in the Black Belt or Birmingham. That is, if you define power as the ability of a group to execute their will. Yet guests of the Alabama Democratic Executive Committee could plainly see a different manifestation of power from the cold, calculated power one thinks of with bureaucracy. Instead, this is a power born from chaos.

The Montgomery auditorium rumbled louder than the halls of Westminster in 2016, the meeting was run by Robert's Rules of order in name only. The lack of decorum that Robert's Rules requires was evident throughout the entire process, but the first warning bell rung with a lack of any desire to even start the meeting, which caused it to start 45 minutes late. This is not a death sentence - perhaps the rest of the meeting will run smoothly due to the clear lack of enthusiasm of the 210 committee members to even be there. Instead of following the agenda and rules previously established, however, a dispute formed during the explanation of the rules that wouldn't be resolved until after close to an hour of debate - and even then, they maintained the rules as written.

Nearly two hours have passed since the scheduled start for what was planned to be a two and a half hour meeting, and the committee has just made it past the second line of the agenda. Before deciding on any measures to improve the party or its effectiveness, there's still plenty of bureaucratic work to do. For example, filling all the vacant seats of the committee - according to the bylaws, you cannot vote on national committee members if you have vacancies. Except only the chairs knew there were vacancies, and they already took care of nominating their own replacements without

informing the rest of the committee. This stunt leads to several uncontested elections of new members and the rising discontent of the committee. One of the most egregious examples was a resignation that only two chair members received notice about - at this point, the committee stated they wouldn't fill that vacancy until the resignation could be confirmed. Although National Representatives would normally not be allowed to be elected due to the representative vacancies, the Chair unexpectedly decides to void the bylaws in order to hold the election anyway.

Nearly three hours after the meeting was supposed to be over, the agenda is due to move onto New Business - enacting the Alabama Democratic Party's strategic plan for the state going forward. However, everyone has left. The committee members left frustrated, hungry, and confused. The chair Randy Kelley, however, got exactly what he wanted. The people he supported and that support him got elected. Chaos in the committee allowed for the consolidation of power while not allowing dissenting voices to challenge the status quo. The only balancing act the chair has to concern himself with is not allowing for progressive voices to consolidate so that the old guard continues its hold of power over the party. The best way to do that? Establish arbitrary rules to suggest a path to reform while maintaining your own power structure.

It doesn't matter if you can't expand your influence to obtain higher offices if you can have absolute power over a thieftom. That is what the Alabama Democratic old guard cares about - maintaining their piece of the pie instead of trying to work with others to make a bigger cake.

# THE HIGHS & LOWS OF MOBILE ANIMAL WELFARE

By: Carissa Foster

The City of Mobile, along with many other cities in the southern U.S., is in the midst of a domestic animal overpopulation crisis. Residents of Midtown and Downtown Mobile encounter stray cats and dogs nearly every day. What is the solution? According to the City Council and many concerned citizens, help lies in the construction of a new City Animal Shelter.

The City's current Animal Shelter, located at 855 Owens Street, was originally built in 1965. After a long sixty years, the shelter is overdue for an upgrade. Luckily, after over three years of rumored plans to build a new facility, real momentum has recently occurred. On Tuesday, April 8th of 2025, the City Council finally approved the purchase of a building they say will be the site of the new Animal Shelter. The recently acquired building, located at 1668 West Interstate 65 Service Road S, cost the city \$855,000. This price does not include the cost of renovations that will need to take place to prepare the currently vacant building to house animals.

Although the acquisition of this new building is a step in the right direction, it is debatable if it is actually the best move. There has been community pushback on several fronts, including location and whether the new shelter is going to be capable of meeting

the high demand of Mobile's stray animal population. In fact, the new building is considerably small than the seven acre lot the City initially planned to use for the new Animal Shelter. The previously proposed lot, located off of Montlimar Drive near Cottage Hill, has been owned by the City since 1974. Although the city recently invested nearly \$2 million to clear the land for use as a site for the new City Animal



Shelter, they instead announced a last minute change of shelter location. Since the quoted total cost for the project would have been around \$20,000,000 million (double the City's budgeted amount), they went with the smaller, less ideal location. In the end, time and action will tell if the long awaited City Animal Shelter can provide a suitable solution for our community's stray animal population.

While awaiting the new City Animal Shelter, there are plenty of ways

members of the community can contribute to our City's Animal Welfare right now! The most important thing you can do as a pet owner is to Spay or Neuter your pet. There are hundreds of animals looking for homes in just our local Mobile and Baldwin Counties alone as a result of unwanted litters. Spay/Neuter assistance is offered by various different local rescues, vet clinics, and shelters if you cannot afford the full price of a veterinarian.

- Friends of the Mobile Animal Shelter (Mobile City Residents) - [www.formaspets.org](http://www.formaspets.org) - Fill out a Request Help Form
- Baldwin County Animal Shelter (Baldwin County Residents) - [services.baldwincounty.al.gov/BCASVPORTAL](http://services.baldwincounty.al.gov/BCASVPORTAL) - info for obtaining a discount voucher
- Saraland Animal Shelter (Open to everyone) - Go to Saraland Animal Shelter 104 Station St, Saraland, AL 36571 - A deposit is required to hold an appointment.

If you are interested in adding a pet to your home, consider adopting! There are dogs and cats in every age, shape, size, and color available for adoption from local shelters and rescues!