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Head of L.A. Federation of Labor thrilled with \$15 wage victory

By John Wojcik

Perhaps no one is happier these days than Rusty Hicks, the man who holds the top job in the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Just five months after his election as the federation's secretary treasurer, his vow to push for a \$15 minimum wage in America's second most populous city has become reality.

The city council, of course, has just voted to raise the minimum wage, in steps, to \$15 an hour.

"It's a great day for all working Angelenos," Hicks said May 26 in an exclusive phone interview with the Peoples World. "The voices of the workers have been heard and this gives us much to celebrate."

Hicks, who took over Jan. 1 from the "legendary," as he described her, Maria Elena Durazo, had declared at the outset that a hike in the minimum wage to \$15 was his top priority. "The purpose of this labor federation is to battle against income inequality and to fight both for those who are currently organized into unions and for those who are not. Everyone rises together, there is no going it alone."

Hicks attributed much of the rapid success in achieving the wage hike to the fact that LA unions have been actively reaching out to work with non-traditional labor organizations, worker centers and community groups to fight for the interests of



not just union workers, but everyone who works for a wage. The AFL-CIO, nationally, has been pushing this approach to building a broader labor movement for years now.

"The LA federation is very much in the forefront of this model of unionism that involves building partnerships with groups outside the labor movement," he said, noting that, "hundreds of groups worked together in a coalition to win the minimum wage increase in LA including commu-

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nity, faith, and many other groups.

"We were in all the way with the Raise the Wage Campaign that joined these groups together to fight for the more than 750,000 low-wage workers in the Los Angeles area," Hicks said.

Though new in his current job, Hicks who is

L.A. city council has voted to raise the minimum wage, in steps, to \$15 an hour.

34, is not new to the business of building powerful organizations. He moved into his current job from the position of political director of the labor federation. In that role he helped turn the federation into a force to be reckoned with in California politics. Politicians not only in LA but all across the state have sought the fed's endorsements.

Hicks was elected to his position by hundreds of union reps who represent the federation's 800,000 members distributed through more than 300 union locals. He was the clear choice of his predecessor, Durazo, who took a national job with Unite Here, her old union, to enable her to promote her passions, civil rights, and immigration reform.

"Rusty is a brilliant young organizer," she told the Peoples World the day after the mass mobilizations by fast food workers earlier in the Spring, "and he will bring to this job the experience of a great political organizer as he continues the labor movement's commitment to immigration reform and civil rights."

"There was a change in leadership, but there's been no change in mission," Hicks said yesterday.

"The labor movement continues now to fight for immigration reform, a path to citizenship for the undocumented millions. It cannot be otherwise. Labor is the movement of the workers, immigrants are a big part of the workforce."

Hicks said the labor movement's aim is to "to fight for the freedom of all workers to have a voice on the job, in the community, and at the ballot box."

He praised President Obama for his executive actions that allow millions to remain in the country without fear of expulsion and added, "There are millions in LA alone who need our support." He singled out wage theft as a particular area of concern for immigrant workers.

He serves now in the U.S. Naval Reserves in intelligence and beginning in August, 2012, spent a year in Afghanistan.



John Wojcik is co-editor of Peoplesworld.org

Ireland: gay marriage approved with a landslide yes

By Morning Star

Same-sex couples could be married in Ireland by the end of the year after a referendum described as a "social revolution" solidly backed equal rights.

A referendum on the issue saw 1.2 million people vote in favour on Saturday, with almost two million votes cast. Turnout was 61 per cent.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny praised the courageous step by Irish voters, including the actions of tens of thousands of people who registered for the first time and many who travelled home specifically to cast their ballots.

Tainaste (deputy prime minister) Joan Burton said: "The children in every town, village and schoolyard who will now grow up knowing their country accepts them - whoever it is they one day grow to be, and whoever it is they one day grow to love."

Ireland's parliament, the Dail, will pass new laws paving the way for same-sex marriage within weeks, ministers said.

Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said the

"overwhelming vote" meant that Roman Catholic clergymen, who opposed the Yes vote, needed to reconnect with Ireland's youth.

"It's a social revolution. The church needs to do a reality check right across the board," said Rev Martin.

Anglican Church of Ireland bishops urged a spirit of public generosity from both winners and losers in the debate.

The huge majority for gay marriage also raised questions about whether same-sex marriage would be legalised in Northern Ireland - as it is in the rest of the UK.

Communist Party of Ireland chairwoman Lynda Walker said: "For once the Republic is ahead of the North on these issues. We hope this will be a wake-up call for people in the North."

Ms Walker cautioned that changes to legislation did not equate to a change in people's attitudes, but welcomed the result of the referendum as "very helpful."

In Ireland, 1.2 million people voted in favor of same-sex marriage.

At Jeb Bush event, 19 year-old eats media's lunch on Iraq spin

By John Karnuth

When 19-year-old University of Nevada at Reno student Ivy Ziedrich confronted assumed presidential candidate Jeb Bush, during an event staged by his Orwellian-named Super PAC Right to Rise, she taught us all what it means to put the people in "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Ziedrich, interviewed on MSNBC, stated that the Bush organized Super PAC event was staged in a way to attract or assemble a friendly and supportive audience. She just happened to get word of it and decided to attend. When she heard the Bush false narrative about how Iraq evolved regarding ISIS and violence and instability, she decided to confront him after his speech and challenge his lies, misinformation and misrepresentation of history and facts. She told him, "your brother created ISIS."

Ms. Ziedrich reminded us that there's more on the line in our presidential election sweepstakes than who will appeal to voters in the Iowa Caucus or New Hampshire primary. This college student's opening shot challenged the lowering of our political discourse and media-induced historical amnesia. In questioning Jeb Bush's narrative that Iraq is more unstable today due to President Obama's decision to end the Iraq war and withdraw combat troops, Ziedrich demonstrated that critical thinking and



having the courage to stand up to a moneyed candidate heightens the country's discourse. Take note, mainstream media, a 19 year old just ate your lunch!

All she did was point out historical facts: that Jeb's brother, W, carried out a de-Ba'athification policy that led to the firing of the Iraqi Army, where 500,000 soldiers lost their jobs, pay, pensions, and, oh, allowed to keep their guns, leading to an immediate pool of insurgents (al Qaeda, ISIS, etc)

Jeb pushed back with the false narrative that Obama could have left troops in Iraq. But that answer ignores other facts, such as the inability to renew the SOFA -- the Status Of Forces Agreement (initially negotiated by brother W and expired in 2011) between the U.S. and Iraq -- namely that there is not one because Iraq wouldn't give U.S. troops immunity from prosecutions by local Iraqi laws. That made leaving any troops behind impossible.

Possibly the worst foreign policy disaster in U.S. history, W's Iraq invasion led to the death of nearly 4,500 U.S. troops, hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqi civilians, millions more displaced and an unstable, divided country, reeling in chaos and violence - with a bill still being paid in the \$1.5 to \$3 trillion dollar range.

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In history: Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is signed in 1972

Special to Peoplesworld.org

In 1972, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty was signed by the U.S. and USSR. The two countries agreed not to build defensive missile systems and thus to limit escalation of the nuclear arms race. It was reasoned that if either side deployed defensive missiles, the other would be forced to respond by increasing the number, explosive yield or effectiveness of their offensive nuclear weapons and delivery systems to maintain the balance of nuclear deterrence.

U.S. Pres. Richard Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed the treaty at a summit in Moscow. Later that year it was ratified by the U.S. Senate and the Supreme Soviet. Forming part of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the ABM Treaty entered into force on October 3, 1972.

The treaty barred Washington and Moscow from deploying nationwide defenses against strategic ballistic missiles.

The treaty originally permitted both countries to deploy two fixed, ground-based defense sites of 100 missile interceptors each. Pres. Jimmy Carter furthered nuclear reductions with the SALT II Treaty, signed with Brezhnev in Vienna on June 18, 1979.

It was Carter's main goal, as stated in his Inaugural Address, that nuclear weapons completely disappear from the world. This treaty never passed Congress, however, owing to the international struggle over Afghanistan; the bellicosity between the two great nuclear superpowers ramped up again.

Arms spending proceeds apace. According to some estimates, the U.S. devotes as much on its military budget as the whole rest of the world combined. Who is going bankrupt now?

El historiador de la ciudad de la Habana

Jose Antonio Buergo

Aventurarse a escribir sobre una personalidad en el mundo de la cultura y singularmente de la historia, requiere del auxilio de voluminosa literatura de referencia si se pretende decir verdades y calificar con justicia.

Nacido en 1942, a los 25 años ya era el director del Museo de la Ciudad de la Habana. Tuvo el privilegio y orgullo de ser discípulo avanzado del doctor Emilio Roig de Leushenring y a partir de entonces no ha tenido descanso alguno. Más de doce libros publicados tiene en su haber y pasan de cien sus conferencias magistrales en universidades del mundo, institutos, fundaciones y sociedades especializadas. De compilarse tanta oratoria brillante que le caracteriza, sería quizás la obra testimonio más acabada que un historiador cubano difundiera como un embajador por el mundo.

Especial dedicación de su vida han sido los museos. Como bien dice su cercana colaboradora Magda Resik en su artículo: Eusebio Leal "Los museos, en la lucha contra el tiempo y el olvido" comenta: "El historiador de La Habana cree en la labor de los museos como espacios para perpetuar y dar vida a la memoria. Una nación debe fundar su desarrollo en la tradición, cual brújula orientadora. Uno de los cubanos que más museos ha visto nacer y a los cuales ha prestado su creatividad y estoico servicio es Eusebio Leal". No hay duda alguna.

Entre órdenes, distinciones y medallas ha sido condecorado con más de 60, de ellas 46 extranjeras que dicen mucho del aprecio y la alta valoración que se tiene de su encomiable trabajo en casi 50 años de labor.

Medio siglo de entrega a preservar el legado para estas y las futuras generaciones sobre el concepto de que no se puede amar lo que se desconoce y menos defenderlo.

En el voluminoso curriculum me detengo en el Premio Nacional "Por la obra de toda la vida" otorgado por el Consejo Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural de Cuba en el año 2012. Es cierto, obra de toda la vida dedicada con pasión, con verdadera devoción cuando aprendió de los que le precedieron, hasta cuando con sus manos cargó y trasladó viejos muebles, libros, piezas y restauró aquí o señaló allá el mejor lugar de resguardo, mientras le seguían otros admirados y atraídos por la obra descomunal que se iniciaba justamente como la Revolución cubana, porque fue ella la matriz de los sueños.

Encontraron en Leal las manos y el pensamiento dispuesto al sacrificio. Cualquiera que asome hoy a La Habana colonial, mas allá inclusive de sus vestigios amurallados, comprenderá la colosal obra que llevaría años de constancia, meticulosidad, dedicación sin límites para coronar el triunfo.

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