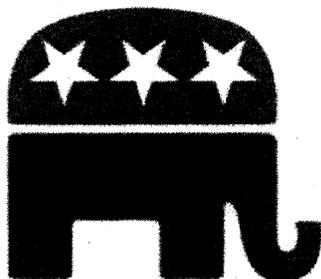
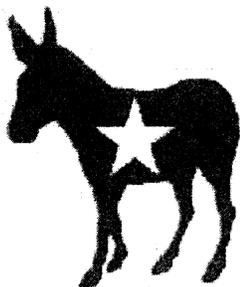


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A Poll Worker Has a Question: "Why Can't We All Just Be Democrats?"



I had the rare opportunity to work as a precinct poll worker in the recent historic primary election. My job was to pass out ballots to Democrats, Republicans and Independents. I shared a table in a suburban middle school with a number of other poll workers. We pulled a 16-hour stint during a raging snowstorm. It was during a lull before the storm that the idea struck me like a bolt of lightning: What if everyone in Cuyahoga County voted as a Democrat?

In my opinion, the Republican voters were basically wasting their efforts, backing candidates in the primary election that have little chance of winning in November. There already seemed to be a trend in that direction. The day after the primary, *The Plain Dealer* reported that 16,000 Cuyahoga County Republicans had jumped ship and voted on the Democratic ballot. We saw some of that action at our table but paid it little heed. Yet the old *switcheroo* put our local Democratic Party leaders in an uproar. They claimed that the Republicans crossed party lines only to influence whether Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama would face Republican Presidential candidate John McCain in November.

I thought they should have welcomed the new Democrats with open arms. That is what County Democratic Chairman Jimmy Dimora did when three Republican Mayors switched parties on Election Day. He was quoted as saying that they were just coming over to the winning team.

Maybe that is what the 16,000 Republican voters were doing. Maybe they are on the cutting edge of a wholesale conversion. For all practical purposes Cuyahoga County has been under one party rule for as long as most of us can remember.

Who can blame the local Republicans for wanting to add their two cents to the 10th district Congressional election? It features the world famous Dennis Kucinich, the hottest race in town.

It was amazing comparing the Republican and Democratic ballots that I was handing out. The Democratic ballot was so much longer. There were so many names, so many choices, so many incumbents. The Republicans were lucky if they could find even one candidate per office to be led to the slaughter.

I suddenly realized that Cuyahoga County's Republicans had been wasting their primary votes for all these years. A Democrat could vote for Dennis Kucinich twice on the same ballot, once for President and once for Congressman. Why couldn't Republicans have that kind of fun? I envisioned the day when Kucinich would also run for County Commissioner and Common Pleas Judge. Then he would be guaranteed at least one job on the public payroll no matter how low his

ratings sank.

In the spirit of Barack Obama, I say it is time for a wholesale change in the way we handle elections in Cuyahoga County. What if every Republican followed this new trend, crossing over and becoming a Democrat? Then the voting would become really interesting.

Everyone knows that if you want to be elected to a public office in Cuyahoga County you must fulfill two important requirements. First, you must have the blessing of the Democratic Party. Second, you must have an Irish surname, especially if you are running for one of the many judicial slots. That is, unless your last name is Russo. I counted four Russo's out of 28 candidates recommended on the County Democratic Party's official sample ballot.

In fact, I was amazed at how many voters took the Democrat's sample ballot into the election booth with them. They were all just voting the straight party ticket. It reminded me of the elections the Soviet Union conducted during the Cold War. Everyone could vote as long as you voted for the Communist Party's candidates. Cuyahoga County's one party system already closely resembles the former Soviet Union's. Once all the Republican voters cross over the transition will be complete.

Of course, life in Communist Russia was no bed of roses but what the heck, living in Cuyahoga County is not much fun anymore, either. If current trends continue we will soon have more citizens collecting welfare than taxpayers paying for it. It was only a few decades ago that Cuyahoga County was one of the largest and most prosperous counties in the nation. It would be too easy to blame our current Democratic Party leaders for its steep decline.

Once we all become Democrats we can jump on the bandwagon and blame the President of The United States for all our problems. That is also what the Soviet Union did.

From *Cool Cleveland* contributor Peter Jedick pjedick@aol.com

Jedick's latest novel, *The West Tech Terrorist* is in bookstores now.

Visit <http://www.westtechterrorist.com> for more info.

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