**Saarbrucken speech**

* Thank you to RLS, PoEL, especially to Stephan Peter, who has put in a huge amount of work and is here now despite being quite ill, and thanks to all of you for being here tonight. This is my first visit to Saarbrucken, and indeed to the Southwest of Germany, where my mother’s family came from, migrating to the United States in the early 20th century, so it’s special for me to be here with you tonight.
* My name is Ethan Earle, I’m from the US but now based in Paris, working as a political consultant. I have a long working relationship with RLS, including as program manager in their New York office for almost 7 years. And I am also the co-chair of the International Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America, the largest socialist organization in America in a hundred years with 60,000 members, including the well-known Members of Congress Rashida Tlaib and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. I am particularly proud of DSA as the first national organization to formally endorse the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign, and one which has since developed a largescale independent operation working closely with the Bernie campaign to make him the next president of the United States.
* My own relationship to Bernie goes back much further. Most of my extended family is from Vermont, and Bernie Sanders was the mayor of its largest town of Burlington, where my mom’s family lived, and I would spend summers there throughout my childhood. My mother’s family is very working class, my mom is the first and only person from her family to go to university, most of the women work as hairdressers, most of the men work in the construction trade. A few of them, I’m sorry to announce, voted for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election, and all of them, without exception, have been voting for Bernie Sanders for decades. They didn’t talk about politics much, but when they did, I remember them saying, we don’t know about all that crazy stuff about democratic socialism, but we do know that Bernie Sanders is an honest man. He tells us what he thinks, he tells us when he disagrees, he tells us the truth. He always says what he means, and he does what he says he’ll do. We know he’s working as hard as he can to represent not just the rich people on the north side of town, but all of us. This was my introduction to left politics, and it was also my introduction to how politics can be transformative, how an inclusive politics based in the working classes can take people and change their minds.
* The most recent example of this transformative effect was last Saturday in the Nevada caucus, where Bernie won 47% of the vote, 24 of 36 pledged delegates, in the process claiming nearly 60% of the Latino vote, as well as a plurality of voters who describe themselves as moderate or conservative. In the process, he destroyed the media narrative that his is an ultra-leftist movement of largely white “Bernie Bros”. But what exactly *is* this transformation… what does Bernie’s policy platform call for?
* First off, universal healthcare, otherwise known as Medicare for all and Free university and education for all, neither of which might seem to revolutionary here in Germany, but which I can ensure you very much is in the US, where annual health care profits are around $100 billion dollars, and where student debt currently measures $1.6 trillion, roughly the same size as the economy of Russia. Bernie also proposes to use an executive order to cancel this debt in its entirety, to take it off of the debt ledgers of the biggest banks in the world, which by any national measure is an incredibly radical proposal. There is also his Green New Deal plan, in which Bernie proposes to transform the US energy system to 100% renewables, reducing carbons emissions to zero by 2030, and in the process creating 20 million quality jobs to retrofit US infrastructure. Then of course there is Housing for All plan, a $2.5 trillion initiative to create 10 million affordable housing units and end homelessness in America. And just recently, a $1.5 trillion plan to provide universe childcare for all children 0-4 years of age. And finally, in foreign policy, Bernie repeatedly reminds us that the climate crisis is our biggest national threat, pledging to re-enter the Paris Agreement and contribute $200 billion to the Global Climate Fund. He will pay for this by massive decreasing the US military budget, at the same time regularly denouncing the US history of military intervention and preparing an end to the “forever wars” that the country has been leading since before I was born.
* Perhaps even more impressive than all of this is the way he presents this program, not as one to be developed by politicians and technocrats, but rather to be demanded and led by movements of ordinary people. His campaign slogan is “not me, us”, his call is for nothing less than a political revolution in the US. And his call has been responded to by millions of ordinary people – donating a few dollars at a time to his campaign at the same time that he rejects all corporate money – in a way that has never happened in US history.
* The way that he proposes to get from here to there, the way in which his entire campaign has been run, has been to reject the false dichotomy between older workers in deindustrialized regions of the country and younger more diverse populations in its urban centres, and instead to build a diverse, multi-generational, working and middle class movement around his ambitious proposals, around calls to solidarity, and around a clear message that we are not competing against each other; we are all on the same side against a small number of corporate elites who are stoking false divisions between us and taking advantage of us all in the process. This is a lesson that would be well taken by segments of the German left in this moment.
* This is the politics, and the coalition that was on display in Nevada last weekend. This is the campaign that will compete in South Carolina tomorrow, and this is the campaign that we bring into Super Tuesday, this coming Tuesday, when 14 states will vote, representing around 40% of the total electorate. At this moment, Bernie is leading in 9 of the 12 states in which sufficient data is available, including California, where he is leading by 15-20 points and could plausibly win an outright majority of its 415 delegates according to state rules, in the second largest state in the country, Texas, where his emerging Latino electorate might threaten to turn the state into a so-called “swing state” against Trump, and in my home state of North Carolina, where I am proud to announce that I have just convinced my younger brother to vote for Bernie.
* My brother is also not any kind of ultra-leftist. He voted for Hillary over Bernie in 2016, and he was previously Elizabeth Warren, who is a fine candidate in many ways. He does not wake up every morning and read the political news like I do. The winning argument, when I talked to my brother, was not that he has to agree with everything about Bernie’s policies, or Bernie’s revolution. But he was convinced by the 47 of the last 50 polls that show Bernie beating Trump at the national level; and by the state-to-state match-ups in which Bernie consistently polls ahead in crucial region of the Upper Midwest, which was key to Trump’s 2016 victory. And he was convinced by the way that Bernie has brought people into the political process, has won over people like our extended family in Vermont, and has done so with an optimistic and ambitious program for what America could become that most clearly positions him in opposition to Trump’s darker visions, and does so without simply arguing that the country should or even could just go back to the way things were before, which already under Obama were not working for too many people.
* One last place that will be voting, starting on Super Tuesday and running for the next week, is not a state at all; it is the world. That’s right, we hold a Global Primary, which in 2016 sent 13 delegates to the convention on the basis of 35,000 votes, meaning that each vote counted 3-4 times more than in conventional state primaries. In 2016, Bernie won 9 delegates to Clinton’s 4, and we’re fighting to ensure Bernie dominates this Global Primary, and shows that the election of a US president who is focused on combatting climate change and ending endless wars is truly a *global* issue. (Show Bernie for France tee-shirt.)
* And because we’re in the middle of a campaign, here’s my quick campaign pitch to you. Each of you knows somebody from the US living abroad, here in Germany or elsewhere in the world. Many of these people might not even know about the Global Primary, or might not understand that voting in it is much more valuable than voting in their home states. And while Twitter likes and re-tweets feel good, there is nothing like going out, one by one, and bringing your friends and loved ones into Bernie Sanders’ political revolution, just like I did with my brother. So get up tomorrow morning, use it as an excuse to call old friends or to call new ones, tell them about the Global Primary – which they can easily sign up for through Democrats Abroad – and share the message about the world that Bernie Sanders is right now fighting for, for all of us.
* Going forward, what can we expect? Let me now quickly lay out the broader political situation for you. Bernie Sanders will emerge from Super Tuesday with some sort of lead in the delegate count. It might be enough for him to already effectively confirm a pluralist majority of the approximately 3,979 delegates up for grabs in this primary. Whether he crosses the 1,991 delegate majority threshold, which would be required to avoid a contested convention, is still very much something to be fought for. A major article published yesterday in the New York Times and based on interviews with top Democratic officials concluded that “democratic leaders are willing to risk party damage to stop Bernie Sanders”. Meanwhile, former New York Mayor and multi-billionaire Mike Bloomberg has spent $500 million on advertising, literally buying his way into a tie for second in national polls, and is set to enter the race on Super Tuesday, with the explicit goal of preventing Bernie from winning the candidacy. And in a debate last week, none of the major candidates except for Bernie would agree that the most voted candidate during the primaries should necessarily receive the nomination.
* The situation shaping up is that a number of candidates for now remain in the race largely in the hopes of being selected as a sort of “consensual” (establishment) choice in the case that Bernie fails to win a majority of delegates. This is the case with former VP Joe Biden, who in spite of a shaky campaign was a former frontrunner, has a large amount of name recognition and still leads polls in some states, including South Carolina, which is voting tomorrow. This is the case for 37-year-old Pete Buttigieg, who fought Bernie Sanders to a draw in the first Iowa caucus and has carved out a space as the Emmanuel Macron “neither left nor right, but forward” candidate of the campaign. It is also the case for Elizabeth Warren, who after moving to the left several months ago, has now re-centred her campaign as one capable of creating “unity” between the Bernie Sanders left and the establishment centre. So, a contested convention is now *the* desire of large swaths of the US political establishment; it is a real danger, and it is the current fight for the Bernie campaign to get past that 50% threshold, or as close to it as possible. My own political analysis is that if we cross even the 40% threshold it will be impossible for the establishment to engineer a coalition to defeat him; he will have too large of a lead and the public mandate will ensure that he crosses the line to achieving a majority. However, if he is closer to 33%, the media narrative will become that 2/3 of voters did *not* choose Bernie, and the struggle to make him the chosen candidate will be very difficult, and probably very ugly. So this is now our struggle and, as I mentioned earlier, I ask all of you to do your part over this next week by letting your friends know about the Global Primary, and in so doing joining this political revolution that is growing one person at a time, being carried and handed off from one person to the next.
* I will close simply by saying something that all of you who are here tonight are no doubt already aware of: the US elections are not merely a domestic affair. Bernie’s awareness of the climate crisis, and his commitment to demilitarization, are longstanding and clear. But perhaps just as important – in this moment in which the world is ravaged by rising right-wing nationalists, spreading hate and violence from India to Brazil to right here in Germany – is the difference that a clear-eyed, progressive US presidency would have. Bernie would not coddle the likes of Saudi Arabia, he would not coddle India’s right-wing nationalist Prime Minister Modi as we saw Trump do in the last days. He would project a different way of doing politics – one based on compassion, solidarity, social justice, environmental justice, economic justice, and racial justice. Much as Trump’s presidency has given oxygen to the fires of the far right, Bernie’s presidency would help to extinguish these fires and create space for progressive, justice-based movements – here in Germany, in Europe and across the globe – to take a deep collective breath of this fresh air that we so badly need, to come together and begin to rebuild a world that is based on justice, sustainability, and solidarity. Thank you.