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# Bernie's Dead-End Math — and Why He Should Stay In

Timothy Egan MARCH 16, 2016

Yes, it's inevitable. Try to shrug off that Clinton fatigue. Hold your nose, if you have to. The only thing standing between a thuggish narcissist and the White House is the almost-certain Democratic nominee — Hillary Clinton.

Not-quite-as-Super Tuesday was an unqualified triumph for Clinton, who outperformed polls and expectations across much of the map. Whatever momentum Bernie Sanders had after the upset in Michigan dissipated Tuesday night. Madame secretary cleaned his clock where she had to.

It was the last chance for Sanders to show that he had a path to the nomination. The math now makes it nearly impossible for him to get the bid, even with a favorable string of states ahead.

Particularly in Florida — with a Democratic Party of New America demographics — Clinton showed once again that her appeal is far broader than Sanders's. To catch Clinton, Sanders needed to get beyond his core of young, college-educated whites. If he'd won Ohio and Illinois, where he was competitive, he'd have some wind at his back. He's a statement candidate now — a strong one, full of integrity.

But that doesn't mean the 74-year-old socialist-lite should get out. He's done a real service, for the party he only recently joined, and for the country. Clinton is a far better candidate because of him. More than that, the Democratic Party is paying attention to the angry millions in the margins, those who may be tempted by the demagogue who wants to make America white again. Thank Sanders for that.

And because of Sanders, millennial voters who flocked to Barack Obama but have a meh feeling about another Clinton are back in the arena. This generation will determine who is the next president. They've been whacked by student loans, a humiliating recession, the hangover of a disastrous war. They're trying to find their way in an economy that is more unequal now than at any time since the 1920s. Sanders has organized them, thrilled them with ideas once considered radical, and done it all without personally insulting his rival.

Because of Sanders, the word "socialist" is no longer toxic in the United States. I have many problems with socialism, not the least of which is that it's generally been a failure wherever it's been broadly applied. But capitalism has its cruel excesses, its many failures as well. Why has the average low-wage worker been left behind in this nation of hypercapitalism?

One reason is those "disastrous trade deals," as Sanders calls them. And because of him, Clinton has now hedged her support for the latest of these trade agreements, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, one that she helped negotiate. The next president has to listen less to the corporations that drive these deals, and more to the people who are their victims.

On health care, on banks, on the influence of Wall Street, Sanders has pulled Clinton to the left. By raising more than \$135 million from 1.5 million individual donors, Sanders has shown he can match big money. His ideas will shape every part of the party platform, which will give Clinton what she lacks: a clear message. Eventually, he'll endorse the woman he influenced, and Democrats will be the better for it.

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