

BDS Movement Gets a Boost From Bernie Sanders

As the Democratic Party prepares for its national convention in July, there are bound to be several contentious issues its members must grapple with, but one in particular has leapt to the forefront, thanks to U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.)

Among the five members of the party's platform committee he was able to hand select is Cornell West, a well-known member of the Boycott-Divestment-Sanction Movement. Sanders, who is the first Jewish candidate to ever win a presidential primary election for either political party, has made it his mission to change his party's stance on Israel.

In the past, West, who makes no bones about his anti-Israel views, called the Gaza Strip "the 'hood on steroids." Two years ago, he wrote an article in which he said Islamist terrorism committed by Hamas "pale in the face of the Israeli slaughters of innocent civilians."

Sanders also picked James Zogby, the president of the Arab American Institute, and U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), the first Muslim elected to Congress. Both are well-known for their criticisms of Israel in the past. Hillary Clinton and DNC Chairwoman Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz—who picked six and four committee members, respectively—and picked a number of pro-Israel members.

Rep. Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) will be the committee's chairman. He has strong ties to his district's local Jewish community, and sends a group of Baltimore-area high school students to Israel every summer.

The makeup of the committee promises some explosive disagreements, particularly on the issue of Israel's security.