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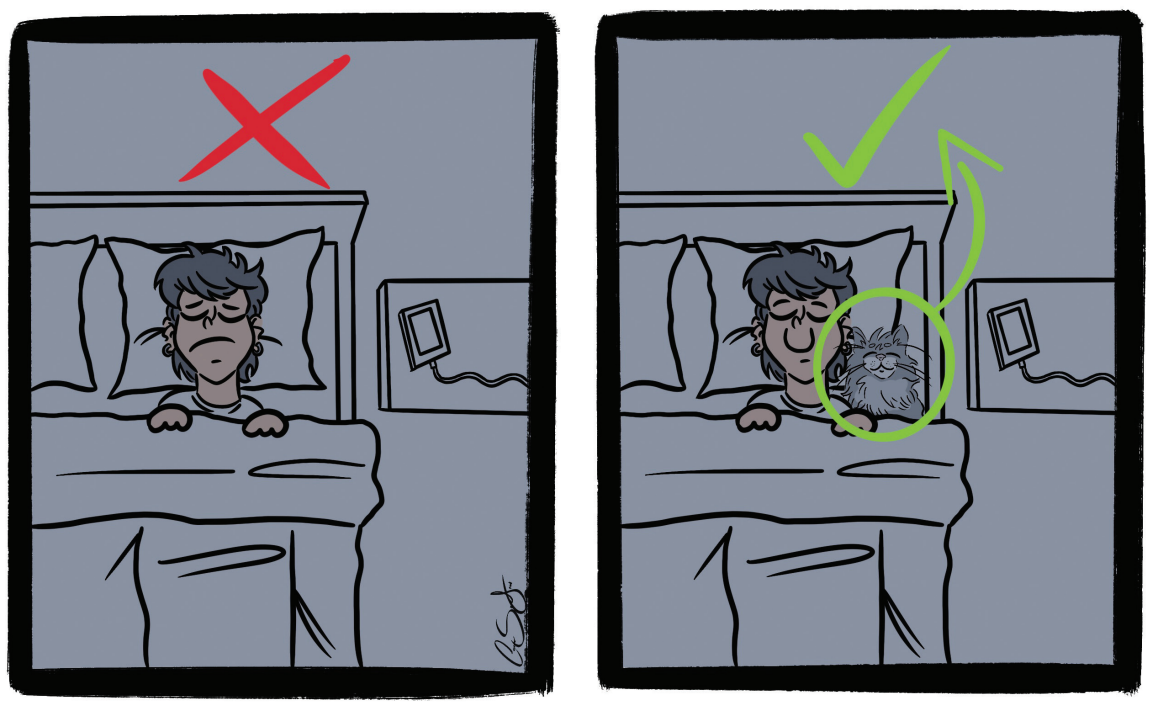
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Daily OPINION

# IS HASAN PIKER TOO RADICAL FOR UCONN?

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**American political commentator and influencer Hasan Piker gets interviewed on stage. Piker promotes his left-wing views on his social media platforms.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF @HASANDPIKER ON INSTAGRAM

Would the University of Connecticut administration allow a Hasan Piker speaker event on campus? To speak frankly, I don't know; but the fact that the question is ambiguous is concerning. It is impossible to say for certain, as no event has been announced by Hasan Piker or UConn. Though In my opinion, it would not be surprising if UConn canceled a Piker event.

UConn's ties to Israel are too strong, and they have, in the past, cracked down on student pro-Palestine action. I believe Hasan Piker is likely too "radical" a figure for UConn to accept, despite widespread youth support for his pro-Palestinian stance.

For those who are unaware, Piker is a Twitch streamer and provocative commentator who rose to internet stardom with his coverage of the 2020 presidential election, though he had been a media personality on The Young Turks since 2013.

Since his rise, Piker has become increasingly involved in politics. He endorsed Democratic socialist and Mayor of New York City Zohran Mamdani in 2025, and since has campaigned with and/or endorsed many democratic hopefuls: Abdul El-Sayed (Mich.), Francesca Hong (Wis.), Claire Valdez (N.Y.), and Conrad Blackburn (N.Y.) to name a few.

Piker is a very outspoken anti-Zionist, extreme anti-fascist and anti-imperialist. Since he started streaming, he has been critical of Israel's actions and sympathetic to the Palestinian people.

In his media journey, Piker has courted controversy, though it does not rest on his pro-Palestinian socialist stance alone. Famously, in 2019, Piker said, "Americans deserved 9/11," later clarifying his intended meaning to express the concept of blowback, an established explanation for the tragedy. He apologized the next day and has done so repeatedly since. Incendiary language is expected from a self-described "shock jock" who streams eight hours a day on divisive issues, but it does paint target on his back and jeopardizes his credibility.

Piker was slated to be on the 2026-27 Speaker Series for the University of Washington until its abrupt cancellation. UW attributed its cancellation to scheduling errors. In September, the University of Texas at Austin also canceled an event featuring Piker.

UW and UT Austin are ranked 260th and 124th, respectively, out of 261 universities for upholding free speech by FIRE, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. UConn is between the two at the 195th slot.

The trend of universities cancelling Piker's events isn't the only reason UConn likely wouldn't host one. As the genocide in Gaza has progressed, UConn has made no moves to disentangle itself from Israel after years of partnership. In 2022, UConn signed an MOU with the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology based on an agreement first signed in 2012. "It was truly a win-win: a lot of learning, a lot of building relationships," said President Radenka Maric in reference to the MOU meeting.

In recent years, UConn has not demonstrated care for student protest concerns, prioritizing its favorable international partnerships over student opinion. Twenty-five students protesting UConn and Israel were arrested in 2024, and since then UConn has tightened its anti-protest policies, banning loudspeakers, lights, megaphones and anything that may "obscure public access."

In 2025, sociology professor Noel A. Cazenave called for the resignation of President Radenka Maric after the Palestinian protests. He says "she spouts 'love for all' language" while making sure that pro-Palestine voices are never allowed to propagate.

If UConn has tamped down on pro-Palestine student action, why would they allow a pro-Palestine speaker? To avoid upsetting their ties to Israel, UConn would likely avoid having Piker on campus.

It wouldn't be new for UConn to cancel an event because of the speaker; in the 2026 spring semester, a speaker was canceled after weeks of student protest. Canceling a protested event doesn't mean they will cancel a supported one. But it is important to note that student action was needed to cancel the event; you can't take action to force an event to take place. Students would not get the chance to protest if Piker were shadow banned.

But regardless of Piker, freedom of speech is vital on our campus. We need to allow speakers who are radical or, at the very least, controversial. Student concerns should be listened to; our tuition and taxes keep the school afloat.

I recommend that every student who has a belief should voice it, even if it is "radical" or controversial. Invite speakers who you believe should talk, and if they are canceled, protest and demand that the administration give a solid reason why. As a public university, UConn is obligated to follow the Constitution.

I hope that if a Piker event does happen, the administration will not cancel it, but only time will tell. And one can only be so optimistic.

# PATRICK'S POLITICS: THE WEST BANK AND ISRAEL'S (NOT SO) CONSEQUENTIAL ELECTION




FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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On Oct. 16, a little more than 10 days before Israel's upcoming elections, a Washington Post press photographer was run down and beaten by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. The act soon earned headlines around the world and led to calls for the prosecution of those involved. Importantly, this attack was far from a one-off. Next week, as Israel votes to see if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stays in power, we must not forget the war being waged against the West Bank and its people, and we must consider whether anything will change.

The crisis in the West Bank has been largely overshadowed in the past few years by the genocide in Gaza, where about 74,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli firepower in three years. Israel's encroachment on the West Bank has been much more deliberate, but it is no less important to grasping where Israeli politics are at today.

To understand the West Bank's situation now, we must (without getting too far into the weeds) understand how it came to be. In 1967, after the Six-Day War which saw Israel reign victorious over Egypt, Jordan and Syria, Israel occupied the West Bank, as well as other territories such as Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. Israel faced international calls to withdraw from the occupied territory, but only Sinai was eventually returned to Egypt. Ever since, the Israeli state has pursued a policy of settlement in the West Bank, a program that is illegal under international law. Today, there are more than 700,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and the land they control makes up 40% of the territory. Israel has also built a wall separating much of the Palestinian territory from itself, solidifying its splintering of Palestinian land.



**Photo of Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Isreal. Netanyahu is Isreal's longest-serving prime minister.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

This state-sponsored settlement and occupation program has increased rapidly in recent years, as the current government is extremely in favor of expanding Israeli control over the West Bank. On August 18, Netanyahu's government announced new construction in one of the most controversial settlements: the E1 project. Located near the area of East Jerusalem (a territory also illegally occupied by Israel), the E1 settlement is poised to cut off the north of the West Bank from the South, further isolating the Palestinian people from each other. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich explicitly stated the purpose of the project was to "bury the idea of a Palestinian state." Netanyahu and his extremist cabinet see the settlement program as essential to their interests; in their view, a Palestinian state poses a grave threat to their security and thus must never be allowed to exist.

Violence from settlers has also risen, and the attacks are growing alarmingly brazen. In addition to Washington Post photojournalist Heidi Levine, a group of European diplomats was assaulted. These cases of attacks on foreigners are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to settler violence, though. Since January 2023, Palestinians have been partially or completely displaced from 107 of their communities, according to Human Rights Watch. 2026 has been even worse than before, with violence peaking in March and April of this year.

Israeli politicians know the situation in the West Bank; after all, the Israeli state supports and always has supported some form of a settler program that increasingly squeezes Palestinian people. Would a new government make anything better?

It's possible, although we should be skeptical. Netanyahu's main opponent, Gadi Eisenkot, still supports the extension of the settlement program and staunchly opposes the idea of a two-state solution. If Eisenkot were to win, he might curb the worst faults of the Netanyahu regime, but he would not likely provide meaningful change for Palestinians in the West Bank.

As the West Bank continues to be eroded by Israeli occupation, as so-called Israeli "settlers" carry out brutal attacks and as the territory attempts to maintain the barest level of autonomy, it is my sincere hope that the upcoming election will bring some relief. But I fear Israel is choosing between the extremism of Netanyahu and an opponent that only seems normal by comparison. Ultimately, Palestinians living in the West Bank still won't get a say in what happens to them.