State Department revives pre-Trump use of 'occupied' Israeli territory language, but with caveats

The Biden administration may change its U.S. policy toward the Occupied Territories.
Dimentman was riding in a car with two others to the outpost when they were ambushed by shooters with automatic weapons. The other passengers sustained minor injuries.

Dimentman, who was survived by his wife and 9-month-old son, was buried in Jerusalem Friday. At his funeral, the head of the yeshiva where he studied and others vowed to defend Heshek, and his brother said Dimentman was committed to living and studying there.

"Living according to Torah wasn't easy for Yeshiva but he knew it was his mission," Shlomo Dimentman said, according to Ynet. "He bowed to no one. Wherever he felt he needed to be, he went and was loved by all. He never made allowances for himself, not in the cold of winter, not on Shabbat. His wife and he lived in a tiny hut and they were happy there."

The attack comes amid a spate of violent attacks by Palestinians against Jews in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Dimentman is the second settler to be killed this year in the West Bank, after a 19-year-old yeshiva student was shot and killed while waiting at a bus stop in May.

Meanwhile, violent attacks by Jewish settlers against Palestinians are up 56% in the last year, according to a recent Times of Israel analysis.
Queen Esther’s Story Means More to Me After Coming Out

I used to feel shame about not telling my parents sooner, until the Megillah taught me that hiding a secret isn’t evil or a lie if it is necessary.

by Avital Amitai  March 8, 2022

Esther was a beautiful, brave woman. That’s how I learned about her in Hebrew school during readings of the Megillah during Purim. Her story resonated with me across my life. Her very name, a name she bore for the woman that was her grandmother, evoked respect, wisdom and a deep piyut. I dressed up every Purim in a white and gold hanukkah as my grandmother preached in a biva’i modi in the choral. She was everything, the role model from Judaism, I couldn’t wait to emulate every year.

Esther was also a liar. Objectively, she lied her identity as a Jewish woman from her husband, King Ahasuerus of Persia. Purposefully. Yet, every Purim, we all gather to celebrate her and her uncle Mordechai and finally Hess Hamann, the man who would have the Jewish people in Persia killed over an incident his age. After King Ahasuerus pronounced with (Xen), was killed for ado verbalizing her (Amor), the king searched the land for a new queen. Esther was chosen for her beauty, and she had to present herself as a person to be treated with the nation’s wellbeing.

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My fear around coming out was born from a life-long teaching that being queer was wrong, poor black. Abominations. Not in our family, not in our religion, not in our tradition. I thought I could hide myself, overcome myself, my feelings weren’t real, not necessary to act on or explore. When I met my current partner, I realized I couldn’t ignore it anymore, couldn’t pretend that being bi meant that I could make everyone happy by marrying a man.

I first came out to my parent, separately. I think as queer people, we are told the outcome of our coming out will be one of two options: positive acceptance, or rejection to the deepest degree. No one prepares you for the other option they’re. My dad was on his tablet and asked if that meant I was still interested in it. He said yes, but reminded him that in America I might end up with someone who wasn’t a man. My heart was racing, legging my nose not to betray me and confiding something I wanted to keep. Weeks later, when I told him I was dating someone who wasn’t a man, all he asked was, “Is he better than you?”

My mom, on the other hand, was more open. The several of sisters between them had my head spinning, she demanded to know why I lived when she never expected us to be a ruin. Then she went on about how she was all alone, having nothing to do, getting old, and her kids. The degree when one meeting was discussed, the definition of me in Judaism, and Godness, the causal arguments thrown out at the Shabbat table. “If she comes back from Belevitz, I’m putting her out.” Nothing I could ever do proved the security of my ways.

How do you overcome a lifetime’s worth of conditioning to your environment?
I'm a Nonbinary Person. Can I Still Be a Jewish Mother?

By Shelly Sie Stone
Mar 31, 2023

Every now and then, a conversation crops up about the ways in which the elder daughter — the eldest female assigned child in a family, even if there are older brothers — can be considered to be gender fluid. That's because, regardless of gender identity, something about the way eldest daughters are socialized and the roles they take on in a family just sticks.

"Your gender can change but eldest daughter doesn't move. She's erased," wrote Yorky's sister.

"I am an eldest daughter. I sometimes consider myself gender non-binary, another non-binary, to which another replied, "Consuelo. Don't feel bad, then, there is no nothing to lose in some memoirs. It's just the same for an eldest daughter." (Which you.)

As a non-binary person who doesn't present androgynously, I spend a lot of time thinking about gender, and how it connects to our identities and the ways we move through the world. I'm the eldest of two, and my sister and I have joined — mostly secretly — that I played as a person role in me liking her. I struggle to think of being an eldest daughter in its own experience, and therefore I'm no problem calling myself an eldest daughter while still maintaining my non-binary identity.

And yet, when I learned that last December, I found myself surprisingly uncomfortable with thinking of the word "Jewish mother." Considering that I'm Jewish — and that I've long been the "non-binary" ever since I realized that not every record

Jewish culture, and Judaism in general, relies on gendered language, concepts, and archetypes to help create community stories and experiences. From Hebrews being an explicit gendered language, to the differences in gendered obligations to perform certain rituals, in the way we know exactly what someone means when they say "Jewish boy," connecting to Jewish spaces and stories requires an engagement with gender.

That engagement doesn't have to be performative or binary. Publicly sticking outside of the gender binary, even Jewish spaces is, in and of itself, a radical act in the way it requires institutions and individuals to rework their own understandings of gender, and how it
Pavlova With Fresh Berries Recipe

This stunning dessert tastes as good as it looks.

By: Lisa Laufer | March 15, 2023

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This dessert is both simple, and elegant. Pavlovas are delicious all year, but are particularly impressive during Passover. You can serve it with whatever fresh fruit you prefer.
A new Instagram account tells the story of New Yorker Judith Kaplan, America's first-ever bat mitzvah

By Julie Graber  February 13, 2013  11:16 pm

@judythkapan1922

What if America's first bat mitzvah girl had Instagram?

The idea was to create a platform for Instagram users to tell the story of a young girl who might have been using Instagram if it had existed at this historical moment.

Alluring in her daughter’s coming-of-age in public — an honor previously reserved for Jewish boys — was just one of the events Kaplan and Rosenthal wanted to capture on Instagram.

The Instagram account, which will feature in use in the next five years, will celebrate the 100-year anniversary of Judith's bat mitzvah on March 7, 1922, in part of a multi-city series of events at 100th anniversary events.

The best way the Instagram account is to see how it is a conversation with the Jewish community, where you can see what people are doing around the world.
Why Some Holidays Last Longer Outside Israel

Israelis and liberals observe fewer days for some holidays than traditional Diaspora Jews.

In the Torah, major Jewish holidays are shorter than what most traditional Jews outside Israel celebrate now. So we read, "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread" (Exodus 12:15-17) and celebrate eight days of Passover. The festivals of Sukkot, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, and Shemini Atzeret are listed as single days in the Torah.

How did Diaspora practice diverge from the Torah’s instructions? The answer lies in our history, during the time of tension between Jewish and non-Jewish religions around the beginning of the common era.

Addressing Confusion Over the Start of the New Month

The Jewish calendar is lunar. Over 2,000 years ago, a council of rabbis from the Sanhedrin, the ancient legislative and judicial body, held special sessions in Jerusalem at the end of each lunar month to receive witnesses to the first slice of the new moon. Because a lunar cycle is approximately 29.5 days long, it was no mystery when the new moon should appear, but the Sanhedrin still declared months and holidays only on the basis of those witnesses. The omission of any people to witness the time to come and testify, the witnesses were fed and honored. The rabbinic questioned every witness for credibility.

Where did you see the new moon? Was it before or after sunrise? Was it in the north or the south? How high was it? How high was it? Which way was it lit? (Melches 7)

Rabbi Heschel: 62:4

Once the sighting was legitimized, the rabbis declared the new day to be Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the new month. Originally, beacon fires would be set on mountaintops to spread the word to distant Jewish communities across the land, in the same way as we...