

[N. Bernstein]

Beliefs & Customs - Folk Stuff 16

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Joseph Vogel

ADDRESS

DATE March 27, 1939

SUBJECT Miscellaneous

1. Date and time of interview

On the street

2. Place of interview N. Bernstein (insurance salesman) 4320 Manhattan Avenue Bklyn. N. Y.

3. Name and address of informant

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

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5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE

NAME OF WORKER Joseph Vogel

ADDRESS

DATE March 27, 1939

SUBJECT Miscellaneous (Hospital)

Talmudic Reasoning Gone Haywire

Why go to hospitals to study people? You find plenty of them in the street. I mean with a screw loose in the head. I'm in the insurance business so I meet plenty of people. Half of them are crazy. Well, not half, a few of them. There's one old man, he can't sleep on account of what's happening to the Jews in Europe. He goes around holding his head and he says it's like holding a lump of lead in his hands. He worries day and night what's going to happen to the Jews, in this country too. He feels it, fascism, like a wind on his back. So day and night he thinks and thinks. Before he used to think about the Talmud, now he thinks about fascism. So he comes to me yesterday morning and tells me he's got it all

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figured out. He says maybe after all fascism is a good thing. "What's the matter with you, "I say, "you crazy?"

"I'm not so crazy as you think," he says.

So he's got it figured out like this. Fascism is killing out the Jews. All right. But at the same time it's killing out the Christians. He don't mean the people especially, he means the 2 the religion. It's not only killing the Jewish religion, it's killing the Christian religion. Well, he says, one thing is sure. The Jewish religion you can never kill. They tried it before a few times and it didn't work. So what's going to happen? The fascists are going to destroy the Christian religion. But can a man exist without religion? Whoever heard such a thing? So after the fascists kill the Christian religion, all the Christians will be forced to adapt the only religion there is left: the Jewish religion.

So I say to myself, "You have to be a Talmudist to figure that out."

It just goes to show you how fascism turns a man's reasoning upside-down.