

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 13, NO. 149.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

PERSECUTION OF WATSON AND FORD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE indictment of Tom Watson in Georgia, for circulating “obscene matter” through the mails, followed closely upon its heels by the indictment of E.B. Ford in Minneapolis, under a somewhat similar pretext, suggests the question: “Are President Taft and his fellow Ultramontane agencies trying to make hay before their sun goes into total eclipse on next March 4th?”

That this office entertains no admiration for Tom Watson readers of the *Daily People* are well aware of. The series of articles which have been put into a pamphlet with the title *Watson on the Gridiron* exhibits the man. He is shallow and flippant; he mistakes the readiness of pen for positive knowledge; and he is chockfull of prejudices which he hugs as inspirations of genius. Barely acquainted with the word Socialism, he tackled that vast subject with the recklessness of a giddy-headed school girl.

With similar flippancy and shallowness Tom Watson recently tackled the Roman Catholic political hierarchy. His line of attack was the vestiges of the phallic worship that survive in Ultramontanism. The subject, one that requires vastly more mental training and stores of knowledge than Watson has at his command, is one that has engaged the attention of archeological researches. The phallic worship,—a curious manifestation of the primitive human mind, and rendered all the more curious seeing its tenacity of life, that causes it to survive in Cleopatra’s Needles and in every steeple that rises skyward from our churches,—the phallic worship is no more an obscene subject than the apple story in the center of Paradise. However flippant Watson’s treatment of the subject, the treatment was not obscene. However crude Watson’s array of citations from scientific works, the array could not suggest impure thought. Neither did it. Watson’s exposure of phallic emblems in Ultramontane trappings could hurt only in the sense that Truth hurts. To exclude his publi-

cation from the mails, to indict him for “circulating obscene literature”—that is a piece of unqualified Dark Ages persecution that suggests the rack and the fagot of the Inquisition.

If anything, even more monstrous is the procedure against Ford. There being not a hook upon which an obscene Anthony-Comstockian mind could attempt to hang a charge of “obscenity” in Ford’s publication, he is indicted plump and plain for expressing views against the militarism that Churchianity promotes—one more piece of Dark Age mental despotism.

But the revoltingness of the Government’s course against Tom Watson and E.B. Ford, revolting enough if considered alone, becomes vastly more revolting when contrasted with that same Government’s acquiescence in the violation of the postal laws by Ultramontane publications.

The Brooklyn *Nativity Mentor*, the organ of Father John L. Belford, did nothing short of inciting to murder in its late April number. To quote the paper literally, it stated that the Socialist “is a mad dog of society and should be silenced if need be with a bullet”—WITH A BULLET, if need be! Was that crime-inciting publication refused access to the mails, or was its crime-inciting publisher summoned before the Grand Jury? Never! On the contrary. The courts refused to entertain the case.

The contrast is striking. The impunity enjoyed by the Ultramontane *Nativity Mentor* underscores the, Ultramontane outrages perpetrated upon Watson and Ford.

Reaction has this distinctive virtue. The whip that drives it to its perdition forces it to give full notice of what it is—and what society has to expect of it.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded May 2014

slpns@slp.org