

EDITORIAL

## LEAKAGE IN EDUCATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“The education that the Socialist Labor Party is soaking the country with is certain to produce a stalwart crop of revolutionists, by this I mean a crop of men and women who are serious, determined, and ‘well loaded’ with all the necessary ammunition. Not a word that drops from the S.L.P. is lost. It leaves room for no leakage.”

**W**HILE we share thoroughly our correspondent’s forecast, it may be well to point out a serious error in his estimate of the present, in that which refers to “leakage.”

Whether it be a foible inherent to many, or whether it be the consequence of the mental ill-training of class-society, there is an element upon whom soundness of teachings has everything but a beneficial effect. Let us illustrate.

Knowledge imparts foresight. In the measure that a person is posted upon a subject he can see ahead. A farmer knows, when he sees a potato planted, that no strawberry bush will grow there. So does he who is posted upon the history of the Socialist or Labor Movement, especially if his information is buttressed by a knowledge of general history, need not wait for the full development of many a move in the Movement. He can tell with approximate accuracy what to expect. If the move is good he will know; if bad he can scent it. The information, imparted thereon, has a wholly different effect upon different people.

Take two men, A and B, both of whom are disinclined to accept a given information as correct. The potato—we shall take the illustration given above of the farmer, the strawberry bush and the potato—the potato is planted. The farmer says to A and B: “Is it strawberries you want?” “Yes.” And the farmer then gives the warning: “You need not expect strawberries from that bulb; ’tis going to be potatoes.” A and B will look incredulous, both of them. Presently, the department of the two will begin to differ.

As the potato stalk begins to break through the sod, A will feel less confident in his strawberry expectations; as the stalk shoots up higher; as the leaves begin to bud and then unfold; in short, in the measure that potato evidences multiply, A will drop his strawberry visions. Possibly these may linger on sympathetically until the night shade blossom appears. From that moment on, A will drop his error; he will backpaddle; he may even acquire some esteem for the farmer.

Exactly the opposite with B. In the exact measure that the potato evidences multiply, will he cling all them tighter to his strawberry false expectations, all the time laying up a store of antipathy for the farmer; until, finally, when the appearance of the potato blossom will have rendered any further strawberry claims idiotic, he will consider himself personally affronted; his vanity being pricked, he will harbor deep resentment, and will then seek to revenge himself upon the farmer by becoming a common backbiter.

It is the breed of B that Oliver Wendell Holmes must have had in mind when he defined certain people as the pupil of the eye—the more light is flooded upon it the more it contracts, in resistance to light

Fortunately, the breed of B is not numerous enough for lasting harm. All the same it is numerous enough for annoyance, for the retarding of the Movement to the amount of the “leakage” that the breed causes

This qualification it is well to keep in mind. With it in mind the necessity becomes clear for a bounteous spreading of S.L.P. agitation and literature—bounteous enough to compensate for all leakage.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded November 2011

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)