

EDITORIAL

## THE CUBAN “MAJORITY OF ONE.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE majority of one in the Cuban Constitutional Convention that passed the “Platt Amendment” must just now be tortured with mortification. Their sad plight should not pass unnoticed. It should be taken to heart, and serve as a warning sign-post against the policy of shuffling with difficulties to all bodies engaged in a serious struggle.

The “Platt Amendment,” so-called, is a series of resolutions, drafted by **Senator Platt** of Connecticut and adopted by Congress, that were to be embodied in the organic law of Cuba. The gist of the “Amendment” was a repeal of the Teller Resolution, whereby the United States pledged itself to give sovereign independence to the Island. The “Amendment” placed Cuba under United States suzerainty, and the fact was all the more emphasized by the season of its adoption. The “Platt Amendment” was passed in Congress after the draft of the Cuban Constitution, which read at all points as the act of a sovereign people, was submitted to the President.

Upon this declaration by Congress, the Cuban Constitutional Convention divided into two sets. Both sets recognized what the “Platt Amendment” portended: they saw and felt upon them the mailed hand of power: they also smelled gunpowder and bullets, exchanged in case of a refusal to submit. But one set imagined it could shuffle with difficulties and diplomatize the country out of the scrape; the other set indulged in no such visions, and was resolute to face the worst.

In pursuit of their policy, the former drafted an amendment to the Constitution embodying the “Platt Amendment” in full, but tacking to it resolutions and explanations calculated to dull its edges. In this way the shufflers expected to be able to satisfy all sides: the United States Government imperialists, by pointing to the “Platt Amendment” adopted in full; the Cuban patriots, by pointing to the resolutions and explanations tacked to it. With this scheme they re-entered the Convention, and put their plan through by a majority of just one, and not without sustaining a hot fire from the patriot element, which jeered at their fatuity and

denounced them as traitors.

And now? Now the shufflers and diplomats find themselves in a hole with the wind blowing upon them from both sides. The Tweed lawyer, who officiates in Washington as Secretary of War, now repudiates his own explanations, that appear tacked to the amendment adopted by the Convention, and the President angrily turns his back upon the whole thing, while the Cuban patriot element has nothing but words of scathing contempt for the baffled dodgers. These are speechless with shame, mortification and rage.

The most slippery of grounds to tread is the ground of compromise. Only one in a thousand of such schemes succeeds, and then for a while only: compromises are, at best, mere armistices. There is no permanent compromise possible when Principle is at stake. The part of the wise man—with the emphasis upon “man” as well as upon “wise”—is to stand firm by his colors. In the conflict that ensues HE may go under, but his PRINCIPLE, never. Nay, his Principle will survive, and, taken up again at a more propitious season by others, whose hearts and minds his example has fired, and who resolutely follow his footsteps, the Right is bound to prevail,—and only then.

The ground-work of Right is Manly Fortitude.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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