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## Address of the Honorable S. F. Austin Delivered at Louisville, Kentucky, March 7, 1836 (excerpts)

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When a people consider themselves compelled by circumstances or by oppression, to appeal to arms and resort to their natural rights, they necessarily submit their cause to the great tribunal of public opinion. The people of Texas, confident in the justice of their cause, fearlessly and cheerfully appeal to this tribunal. In doing this the first step is to show, as I trust I shall be able to do by a succinct statement of facts, that our cause is just, and is the cause of light and liberty:-the same holy cause for which our forefathers fought and bled:-the same that has an advocate in the bosom of every freeman, no matter in what country, or by what people it may be contended for.

...In 1833 the people of Texas, after a full examination of their population and resources...decided that the country possessed the necessary elements to form a state separate from Coahuila. A respectful and humble petition was accordingly drawn up by this convention, addressed to the general congress of Mexico, praying for the admission of Texas into the Mexican confederation as a state.

...Many months passed and nothing was done with the petition, except to refer it to a committee of congress, where it slept and was likely to sleep...At this time (September and October, 1833,) a revolution was raging in many parts of the nation, and especially in the vicinity of the city of Mexico. I despaired of obtaining anything, and wrote to Texas, recommending to the people there to organize as a state de facto without waiting any longer. This letter may have been imprudent, as respects the injury it might do me personally, but how far it was criminal or treasonable, considering the revolutionary state of the whole nation, and the peculiar claims and necessities of Texas, impartial men must decide. It merely expressed an opinion. This letter found its way from San Antonio de Bexar, (where it was directed) to the government. I was arrested at Saltillo, two hundred leagues from Mexico, on my way home, taken back to that city and imprisoned one year, three months of the time in solitary confinement, without books or writing materials, in a dark dungeon of the former inquisition prison. At the close of the year I was released from confinement, but detained six months in the city on heavy ball. It was nine months after my arrest before I was officially informed of the charges against me, or furnished with a copy of them. The constitutional requisites were not observed, my constitutional rights as a citizen were violated, the people of Texas were outraged by this treatment of their commissioner, and their respectful, humble and just petition was disregarded.

These acts of the Mexican government, taken in connexion with many others and with the general revolutionary situation of the interior of the republic, and the absolute want of local government in Texas, would have justified the people of Texas in organizing themselves as a State of the Mexican confederation, and if attacked for so doing in separating from Mexico. They would have been justifiable in doing this, because such acts were unjust, ruinous and oppressive, and because self-preservation required a local government in Texas suited to the situation and necessities of the country, and the character of its inhabitants. Our forefathers in '76 flew to arms for much less. They resisted a principle, "the theory of oppression," but in our case it was the reality - it was a denial of justice and of our guaranteed rights - it was oppression itself.

Texas, however, even under these aggravated circumstances forbore and remained quiet. The constitution, although outraged and the sport of faction and revolution, still existed in name, and the people of Texas still looked to it with the hope that it would be sustained and executed, and the vested rights of Texas respected. I will now proceed to show how this hope was defeated by the total prostration of the constitution, the destruction of the federal system, and the dissolution of the federal compact. It is well known that Mexico has been in constant revolutions and confusion, with only a few short intervals, ever since its separation from Spain in 1821. This unfortunate state of things has been produced by the effects of the ecclesiastical and aristocratical party to oppose republicanism, overturn the federal system and constitution, and establish a monarchy, or a consolidated government of some kind. In 1834, the President of the Republic, Gen. Santa Anna, who heretofore was the leader and champion of the republican party and system, became the head and leader of his former antagonists-the aristocratic and church party. With this accession of strength, this party triumphed. The constitutional general Congress of 1834, which was decidedly republican and federal, was dissolved in May of that year by a military order of the President before its constitutional term had expired. The council of government composed of half the Senate which, agreeably to the constitution, ought to have been installed the day after closing the session of Congress, was also dissolved; and a new, revolutionary, and unconstitutional Congress was convened by another military order of the President. This Congress met on the 1st of January, 1835. It was decidedly aristocratic, ecclesiastical and central in its politics.

...It accordingly, by a decree, deposed the constitutional Vice President, Gomez Farias, who was a leading federalist, without any impeachment or trial, or even the form of a trial, and elected another of their own party, Gen. Barragan, in his place. By another

decree it united the Senate with the House of Representatives in one chamber, and thus constituted, it declared itself invested with full powers as a national convention. In accordance with these usurped powers, it proceeded to annul the federal constitution and system, and to establish a central or consolidated government. How far it has progressed in the details of this new system is unknown to us. The decree of the 3d of October last, which fixes the outlines of the new government, is however sufficient to show that the federal system and compact is dissolved and centralism established.

...Had the change been effected by constitutional means, or had a national convention been convened, and every member of the confederacy been fairly represented, and a majority agreed to the change, it would have placed the matter on different ground; but, even then, it would be monstrous to admit the principle, that a majority have the right to destroy the minority, for the reason, that self-preservation is superior to all political obligations...The constitutional authorities of the State of Coahuila and Texas, solemnly protested against the change of government, for which act they were driven by military force from office, and imprisoned. The people of Texas protested against it, so they had a right to do, for which they have been declared rebels by the government in Mexico.

These revolutionary measures of the party who had usurped the government of Mexico, were resisted by the people in the states of Puebla, Oaxaca, Mexico, Jalisco, and other parts of the nation. The state of Zacatecas took up arms, but its efforts were crushed by an army, headed by the president, General Santa Anna, in person; and the people of that state were disarmed, and subjected to a military government. In October last, a military force was sent to Texas, under Gen. Cos, for the purpose of enforcing these unconstitutional and revolutionary measures, as had been done in Zacatecas, and other parts of the nation. This act roused the people of Texas, and the war commenced.

Without exhausting the patience by a detail of numerous other vexatious circumstances, and violations of our rights, I trust that what I have said on this point, is sufficient to show that the federal social compact of Mexico is dissolved; that we have just and sufficient cause to take arms against the revolutionary government which has been established; that we have forborne until the cup was full to overflowing; and that further forbearance or submission on our part would have been both ruinous and degrading; and that it was due to the great cause of liberty, to ourselves, to our posterity, and to the free blood which I am proud to say, fills our veins, to resist and proclaim war against such acts of usurpation and oppression.