

ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT A GUERRILLA

Ramón Salas, Intendant of Guadalajara, to Juan Martin Diez (1775–1825)

Guadalajara, 21 January 1810

Good men may adopt a line of conduct and discharge their duties in that line up to a certain point with good faith and honesty; but beyond that all is obstinacy and is unpardonable.

I consider you to be precisely in this situation: you proposed to yourself to serve your country, you espoused her cause and followed the part she took, and have sustained her by every means in your power; you have gained a reputation even amongst your enemies well-deserved from the numerous good qualities with which you are endowed; you have done everything you could or can do; but surely you must see that all the efforts you hereafter make in the support of this desperate cause will be vain and fruitless, and will only add to the calamities of your country, in whose welfare you are so much interested and for which you have so incessantly labored. The very same feelings which have hitherto guided you and your natural honorable sense of duty should induce you now to listen to me and save your country from further scenes of bloodshed.

After the victories gained by the French at Almonacid and Ocana; peace concluded between France and Austria; fresh troops continually pouring into Spain—can any sensible man, I would ask, doubt the success of our undertaking? I beseech you, reflect upon this. Do not suffer yourself to be led away by vain hopes or expectations which can never be realized, and by an enthusiasm that is the more incompatible with common sense in proportion as it is the more exalted. At this moment the interest of the country is your interest; listen then to these combined interests, and they convince you that it is time to join the friends of a good, virtuous, and just king, a king whose only object is to love and be beloved by his subjects. This illustrious prince, who feels no greater pleasure than in pardoning offences committed against him, authorizes me to endeavor to gain you over to his side, and offers every protection and security to you and your family; he ensures you the rank and military honor you enjoy, and additional rank in proportion to the services you may hereafter perform. As a man of honor, I assure you these promises will be religiously observed; and if any doubts should rest upon your mind, I am ready by the fullest explanation to remove them. The accompanying letter of the Governor of Madrid, you will see, affords you the necessary security for the purpose of entering this town. You can then consult with me or with the military governor, and be at liberty to act afterwards as you may think fit; or if you do not like to treat directly with us, an aide-de-camp of General Belliard's shall meet you at whatever place you may appoint; and the military governor of this province and myself are ready to do the same if you wish it; in short, we are all disposed to follow any plan that you may point out; or, if you choose the negotiation to be carried on by letter, contrive at least that our correspondence may be secure and frequent, in the full assurance that whoever is entrusted with your letters shall have safe convoy both to and from this place. Weigh well and coolly what I propose to you, Señor Don Juan, and profit of the moment that presents itself; for if it passes, there may hereafter be no remedy. Every man under your orders shall be protected and advanced in the line of life he may choose to follow, and you may at once with perfect security enter into treaty with them upon the subject. Let us forget the past; for my part I avail myself of this opportunity to offer you my friendship if you will receive it, and to assure you that I will be a faithful and sincere friend.

-. *The Life and Military Exploits, etc. etc. of Don Juan Martin Diez, The Empecinado...*(1823):46–49.