

## **STUDENT WORK EXAMPLE: ESSAY RESEARCHED IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES**

We've included this student work as a testament to the power of encouraging students to use their full language repertoire in their research.

Taylor Bingle was teaching IB History in a classroom of kids with many home languages, when one of his students came to him with a concern about an assignment. Taylor explains: "Nico came to me overwhelmed and confused. He was visibly tired and worried. His major concern was that there was 'nothing written' on his topic, a military junta in Argentina that began in 1976. I was sure that he was mistaken as there is extensive scholarship online and in our classroom books. However, he explained that it wasn't a lack of content coverage; rather, it was a lack of relevant material to answer his research question, which was asking about the extent to which human rights violations contributed to the downfall of the regime. I remember asking him if he had researched in Spanish, to which he responded, 'Can we do that?' I sort of laughed with him, but deep down I took this as an opportunity to reflect on the importance of encouraging students to research in their native language or in a second language they possess. Even by the end of that class period, his body language changed. He was astonished at the amount of material online, in Spanish. This led him to wonder how many books might be written in Spanish about the topic, which led him to visit his grandparents, ex-Argentine patriots (who had fled the junta's repression). I'll never forget how proud he was coming into class one day with a stack of seven or eight books. Old, dusty, and smelly! His confidence had been restored, and even better, this was an example for other students who spoke Italian, Hebrew, Catalan, Spanish, German, and French to begin researching their topics in other languages. I remember hearing students reflecting with each other, saying things like, 'I didn't know we could research in another language.' "

Nico's paper begins on the next page.

# INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DP INTERNAL ASSESSMENT HISTORY HL

*How significant was the treatment of opposition to the collapse of the Argentinian National Reorganization Process' military rule between 1976 and 1983?*

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### Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Sources:

This investigation will examine the research question: “How significant was the treatment of opposition to the collapse of the Argentinian National Reorganization Process' military rule between 1976 and 1983?” At the end of its seven year rule the Junta Militar started losing power due to a series of factors which ended up with their downfall. This investigation will assess the role of each of these factors in the fall of the Junta Militar's leadership.

My first source, *Deuda Crisis y Política de Ajuste*, is a chapter in *Historia Común de Iberoamérica*.<sup>1</sup> While my second source is *La Política Económica, La Dictadura Militar, 1976-1983*.<sup>2</sup> The two sources are relevant to my investigation since they focus on giving a detailed description of the Military Junta—such as the economic, social and political situation—as well as crucial historians' points of view which supports this investigation. The fact that these two sources give different perspectives on the cause of the downfall of the dictatorship, helps me analyze the significance of varying factors that contributed to the fall of the rule.

The first source is a very valuable source to this investigation. Firstly the origin, authored by José de la Puente, published in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on September 2000. De la Puente holds a PhD in Argentine and Latin American History, ensuring a quality examination of the matter. In addition, the publishing date is valuable since it gives the historian hindsight and access to more factual evidence. Secondly, there is value in the content, the source gives a precise analysis on the weight the treatment of the opposition had on the demise of the Junta. This book also has a few limitations. Despite the valuable content, most of the book is too narrative. Lastly, there's a limitation in the book's purpose, which as the book's title suggests, the book attempts to inform about the general history of Argentina limiting a more detailed analysis of the Junta's failure.

My second source is also valuable to my investigation. Firstly the origin, written by historian Diego Hernán Benítez, is a professor of Latin American state terrorism in contemporary history. These specialties provide a relevant point of view and prove the credibility of the source. Secondly, the content which analyzes the Junta's new economic policies and their consequences, including the author thought on which affected the breakdown the most. This helps my investigation since its main objective is to prove that economic policies were the most significant cause of the dictatorship's downfall. Nevertheless, the source is a limitation to my investigation. Much like the first source its purpose, is to be informative, therefore most of the article leans towards the descriptive nature, limiting an analysis of Hernán's prospective.

1 “Deuda Crisis y Política De Ajuste.” *Historia Común De Iberoamérica*, by José de la Puente, EDAF ENSAYO, 2000.

2 Mónaco, César. “La Dictadura Militar, 1976-1983.” *Riehr*. N.p., 2007. Web. <<http://www.riehr.com.ar/detalleEdu.php?id=7>>. 9 May 2018.

## Section 2: Investigation:

In 1975, Argentine socialist leader Isabel de Perón appointed Jorge Rafael Videla as the highest commander in the Argentine Army. Seven months later, Videla led a coup d'état which took her out of power and pushed her into exile. Over the next five years Videla established the<sup>3</sup> Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (National Reorganization Process) with the objective of<sup>4</sup> making Argentina more conservative by implementing neoliberal economic policies as well as a list of 70 communiques that informed the citizens of the rights that were being taken away.<sup>5</sup> Videla, and his two successors Viola and Galiterei's rule divide the dictatorship into three stages, each of which was marked by a failure. Videla's rule was known for the many violations of human rights as he, and his fellow commanders, were found guilty in 1982 for the kidnapping, disappearing, and killing of over 30,000 people, while Viola and Galiterei were criticized for other reasons that will be investigated in this essay, including the reasons for the Junta Militar's loss of power and demise, and assesses the role of the treatment of the opposition, the loss of the Falkland War, as well as the conflicts that arose from Junta Militar's neoliberal economic policies. In 1968, the CIA created Operation Condor, which organized many Latin American countries with the goal of sharing information to identify, kidnap, or kill any opposition to the right winged governments. Specifically, the US increased their support for Argentina in 1976<sup>6</sup> after the Junta Militar gained power. This can be seen in the declassified State Department memorandum from 1978, where it discusses how Henry Kissinger's "praise for the Argentine government in its campaign against terrorism was the music the Argentine government was longing to hear". However, on April 2nd, 1982, Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri, the last president<sup>7</sup> of the Junta Militar, decided to attack the Falkland Islands in order to relieve some of the tension arising in society, which caused the US to remove its support of the Junta. This sudden war was not supported by the US, since the United Nations passed down the Security Council Resolution 502 which demanded Argentina to withdraw their troops. This loss of support from the US<sup>8</sup> forced the Argentine government to cancel their plans and lose this short war. Historian Jose del Pozo Artigas agrees with this assessment. In *Historia De América Latina y Del Caribe*, he argued that, "The military dictatorship ended in poor condition due to the loss of the war of the Falkland Islands in 1982". In addition, Manuel Lucena Salmoral, Professor of Latin American<sup>9</sup> History at the University Complutense of Madrid, also argued how it was indeed the "disastrous" Falkland war which "forced" Galiterei to resign. Both historians argued that the Falkland war was the most significant cause for the fall of the Junta Militar. Both perspectives are not erroneous, focusing their examination on the period previous to the collapse; however, even though this was a major loss that resulted in the fall of Galiterei's leadership, this is still only one third of the duration of the military dictatorship.

It is clear that the Falkland War had an impact on the downfall of the Junta Militar, nevertheless different historians believe a significant cause of the fall of the National Reorganization Process was the barbaric treatment of the opposition. This indicates that the harsh regime was bound for failure in the early years, making this argument seem as a more long term cause. We can observe how throughout history, authoritarian leaders such as Videla, have used assassinations and kidnappings as an effective method to avoid uprisings and citizen rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

Jose de la Puente stated in *Deuda Crisis y Política de Ajuste*, a chapter in *Historia Común de Iberoamérica* how "the decomposition of the government was due [. . .] fundamentally to the lawsuits by the families of

3 "Deuda Crisis y Política De Ajuste." *Historia Común De Iberoamérica*, by José de la Puente, EDAF ENSAYO, 2000.

4 Proceso de Reorganizacion Nacional is translated to National Reorganization Process.

5 Salmoral, Manuel Lucena. *Atlas Histórico De Latinoamérica: Desde La Prehistoria Al Siglo XXI*. Sintesis, 2005. 8 May 2018.

6 Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay

7 United Nations Security Council Resolution 502. <https://undocs.org/S/RES/502> (1982). 6 May 2018. 6 May 2018.

8 United Nations Security Council Resolution 502. <https://undocs.org/S/RES/502> (1982). 6 May 2018. 6 May 2018.

9 "Argentina y Uruguay." *Historia De América Latina y Del Caribe: Desde La Independencia Hasta Hoy*, by José del Pozo, LOM Ediciones, 2009. 9 May 2018.

10 Sellier, Jean. *Atlas De Los Pueblos De América*. Paidos, 2007. 8 May 2018.

the victims as well as the human rights defenders”. He also<sup>11</sup> mentioned Videla lost his power on the March 29, 1981 due to “a great amount of pressure by international human rights organizations.” Videla losing his power earlier than expected<sup>12</sup> resulted in a negative impact to their rule, being the main organizer and head behind the process. This would indicate that the breakdown of the Junta Militar was due to the treatment of the opposition in the early phases of the Junta.

The Junta Militar was known for its tragic economic crisis, which many historians argue was the final cause for their definite deterioration. Comparisons have been made between the first year the National Reorganization Process initiated to the last, and the data shows significant economic transformation. External indebtedness went from 8 million dollars in 1976 to 45 million dollars in 1983, almost a 500% increase. After 1982, Galtieri faced a 209% inflation, a drop of the national GDP by an 11.4% as well as 34% loss of average salary. Professor of Latin American History, Diego Hernán Benítez<sup>13</sup>, asserted in the article, *La Política Económica* a section in *La Dictadura Militar, 1976-1983*, how “the economic change, the result of this new strategic approach, moved Viola away from the government”. Benítez’s perspective exposes<sup>14</sup> another significant cause for the fall of the Junta Militar. As Benítez affirms the economic policies ended with the second dictator, meaning it was significant in its consequence of removing one of the three out of power. Ultimately these new economic policies, created in order to increase the profits of private business, according to Benítez was the leading cause for the downfall of the National Reorganization Government.

To conclude, the inhumane treatment of the opposition by the National Reorganization Government was indeed a significant cause for their downfall, since it was responsible for Jorge Rafael Videla’s loss of power. The increase in international pressure, including the many major human rights organizations unmasking his ruthless terror, resulted in his succession. Nevertheless, throughout my investigation it has become clear that it was not only this treatment of the opposition which led to the fall of the Junta Militar. In an effort to better the previously mentioned decaying economy, Leopoldo Galtieri failed in his attempt to conquer the British Falkland Islands. Even though the combination of these three major flaws of the Junta Militar resulted in their cataclysmic demise, the most significant cause was Jorge Rafael Videla’s treatment of the opposition. Since he was the most important figure in the dictatorship, his fall meant the end of the Junta Militar.

### Section 3: Reflection:

In 1977, fourteen para-military men pointed M4 machine guns at a 12 year old boy and demanded the whereabouts of his father. When the boy’s father arrived the men put a bag over his head and pushed him in a car. For the following month, the dad was tortured for information. When he was released, his family fled Argentina. This boy was my Dad. Due to this<sup>15 16</sup> emotional connection I have with my research question, I now recognize how one of the biggest challenges historians who have personal connection with the topics faced, is how their personal perspective slants the way they receive, present and reflect on information.

My job as a historian was more difficult than I expected, since there wasn’t a large amount of information online. My investigation was extremely narrow and specific and so I lacked quality sources and historians’ work that could be used in the investigation. When I realized I wasn’t going to find much information on the internet, I decided to go to the library. I went to four different libraries and reviewed at least 35 books. I realize now how historians can’t rely on the internet for their investigations.

I also received the help of my grandparents’ personal library. All of their books had origins in Argentina, and therefore I reflected on the importance of conducting research “in-country” where I imagine I would have had access to far more information. Historians must physically move to the place they are studying as

11 “Deuda Crisis y Política De Ajuste.” *Historia Común De Iberoamérica*, by José de la Puente, EDAF ENSAYO, 2000.

12 “Deuda Crisis y Política De Ajuste.” *Historia Común De Iberoamérica*, by José de la Puente, EDAF ENSAYO, 2000.

13 Salmoral, Manuel Lucena. *Atlas Histórico De Latinoamérica: Desde La Prehistoria Al Siglo XXI*. Sintesis, 2005. 8 May 2018.

14 Mónico, César. “La Dictadura Militar, 1976-1983.” *Riehr*. N.p., 2007. Web. <<http://www.riehr.com.ar/detalleEdu.php?id=7>>. 9 May 2018.

15 Personal Interview with Valentín Barenblit Gertzenstein. 7 May 2018.

16 Personal interview with Pablo Barenblit Sheinin. 7 May 2018.

one can not rely solely on the internet. Even though every book helped in developing my knowledge, only five have been useful in the analysis of the contributing factors, and the construction of my conclusion. I now appreciate the difficulty historians face everyday when analyzing and looking for quality sources with topics as specific as mine.

Even though it was a hard process, being a native Spanish speaker has definitely been an advantage, since I was able to read primary sources as well as Argentinian books and understand actual video footage from the Junta Militar. I started out searching only in English, but as I continued it became clear that the most valuable historians to my work were the ones writing in Spanish. It is clear that polyglot historians have an advantage over those who aren't, due to the amount of sources they are able to read and the value of their translating abilities.

Overall, I've enjoyed researching and investigating for this project due to my personal connection to the topic. I also got to feel like a real historian by studying in libraries, and talking to people who have lived through these rough times. I have benefited from this assignment, since not only do I now feel closer to my family's past, but I also have more respect for the work historians do.

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