

## Andrew Hakes

**Title:** “The National Reorganization Process: Argentina's Past in the Dictatorship Era”

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Ann Livschiz

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**Andrew Hakes** is a history major in his last year at IPFW. His focus in history is conflict and revolution during the Cold War, with a leaning towards Latin America. He recently studied abroad in Argentina and conducted research over the legacy of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. He is currently working on his Honors Project—an examination of the impact of the EZLN (Zapatistas) throughout the Americas. He has presented at the history conference twice before over the topics of Babi Yar and the relationship of the Cuban and US governments after the Cuban Revolution. Currently he is considering post-graduate education and looking at his options.

### **Abstract**

Towards the end of the 19th century, Argentina was an aspiring power in the Americas, only to have its dreams dashed by several military coups after 1930. Before 1930, the future of the River Plate country appeared bright, as it challenged the United States in conferences, while its wealth and resources were the envy of several Western European countries. From 1930 to 1976, the military leaders who ruled the country for thirty years and the civilian leaders who governed for fifteen years were unable to match or come close to achieving Argentina’s former potential. During this time, phenomena appeared that would dictate Argentina’s future: torture, terrorism, and Peronismo, an ideology based around the populism of Juan Perón. For some Peronismo was totalitarianism, and for others it was democracy, depending on whether they liked Perón or not. Argentinian views on democracy did not place the doctrine as exclusively good, just as their views on dictatorship were not of it being inherently bad. Juan Perón polarized Argentine society and challenged the traditional elite of Argentina: the military, landowners, businessmen, and Church. He enacted economic policies that served to protect the Argentine economy and improve the lives of the working class. Due to his Fascist leanings, he promoted national unity through riling up the populace against a certain group of people, and used violence and torture to crush all dissent. Though overthrown and exiled twice, Perón had a profound impact on Argentina. When he returned from exile for the last time, he ramped up a campaign against “subversives,” a designation targeting guerrilla groups he had originally ordered to be created. These actions set into motion a greater usage of Argentina’s oppressive apparatus and the terror that ensued brought death to the forefront of Argentine society. The 1976 coup that ended Peron’s time in power, replaced him with the military-civilian dictatorship that killed anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 Argentine citizens. The polarization of society and politics created by Juan Perón assisted in creating the conditions that caused the 1976 coup and led to the disappearances of thousands of Argentines. Under the junta, the foundation of Peronismo was destroyed and its base was targeted. Under the “National Reorganization Process” the junta engaged in a large social engineering project, killing any in society who disagreed. During the dictatorship certain groups were targeted, such as Jews, Communists, Unionists, and anyone with deemed leftist leanings.

### **Bibliographical Note**

To conduct his research over the dictatorship in Argentina, Andrew used primary sources from Argentina and secondary sources from both the United States and Argentina in order to get a less-biased understanding. Finding information that was not overly politicized was difficult, considering the role the United States played in the Latin American dictatorships and the changing opinion of the United States in Argentina.