The Bare Bones of Brazilian Military Rule: Constructing a Population and Injury Profile of Skeletons Unearthed from a Clandestine Ditch and the Current Need for the Enforcement of the Rule of Law

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The Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985) institutionalized the disappearance of individuals as a form of repression of social and political resistance. This resulted in the Clandestine Ditch of Perus in São Paulo- Brazil, where more than 1,000 human skeletons were found in 1990, and they are yet to be identified or classified. I have built a population profile and established standards for the recognition of bones. I used the PHENICE (1987) techniques of pelvic and cranial analysis to establish the sex of the skeletons; the analysis of the fourth rib, the sacral auricular surface and the pubic symphysis by ISCAN and LOTH(1998) to establish the age of the population; and the mathematical method that considers the long bones by TROTTER and GLESER. I also sought to establish if the injuries were formed ante, peri or post mortem and the mechanisms of violence that caused them, categorized as action by blunt object, punch-cutting device or bullet launch. The results indicated a young male population, in which 70% died before 50 years of age with a high rate of 21,21% of peri-mortem lesions, indicating violent death. It becomes clear that state violence practices and concealment of bodies in Perus was not an isolated incident linked to the past, but an example that must be used as a milestone of a tradition that is perpetuated to this day. It is essential that this legacy of the military dictatorship should end and the rule of law becomes effective forever.

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