

Never forget the famine in Negros

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(Written by John Silva on March 1, 2016)

I was in Negros last week. Thirty years ago I was there just a day after the Marcos overthrow. I was with Oxfam, a relief and development agency and I was to review the malnutrition situation in Negros. Months prior, there were many accounts of the tens of thousands of starving children and our Oxfam reps there urged us to do a feeding program with UNICEF.

I drove past the provincial hospital where I first saw hundreds of malnourished children on mats on the floors tended by their mothers, and later, we were in the country through cane fields and small towns remembering the skeletal children being weighed and assessed by our medical team.

There were over 100,000 children in various degree of malnutrition and we started a feeding program for 90,000 of them, hoping to save the worse cases.

I took this picture of a nine year old girl south of Bacolod who was weighed but the medical team sensed she was not going to make it. She died several days later.





There is much recalling and writing about the Marcos Regime for this 30th anniversary of People Power and because Bong Bong Marcos is running for political office. I heard then as I hear now that Roberto Benedicto was the Marcos crony who dictated the price of sugar and bled the province dry. And starved its people.

I post this picture because aside from all the other nefarious deeds, the Marcos regime was responsible for the slow murder of the children and people of Negros.

Today I see progress in Negros and many healthy children. As our society progresses and moves on to increased levels of obesity and historical amnesia, this picture should be the grim reminder.

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