

# **Resilience means fighting back**

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The recent typhoon Ulysses has left much of Luzon either under water, without access to clean water and a way to ask for help, or a combination of the three. As I write this, many of my work-from-home colleagues aren't able to attend work because of the power lines being down, still.

And like flies to shit, mainstream media and government bureaucrats are using this opportunity to paint the Filipino people as "resilient," all the while washing their hands of the incompetence at the pre- and post-typhoon response. Not to mention the ongoing scandal that is the COVID-19 containment measures that has forced people to brave the risk of plague every day because we can expect no more relief subsidies from the government, while anti-insurgency funds see a record rise.

But why is this the case? Is it any coincidence that those they call "resilient" are those who don't have a choice in the matter? Do they think the people are stupid? No, they don't. At least not to their faces. This is all theater. A big show to keep people distracted from both the incompetence, and the outright greed of those in power.

Resilient people don't need help after all. That way, the promises made during the election campaign don't have to be kept.

Heck, one could even argue that the Filipino people have been resilient throughout history. Four hundred years of colonial rule under various imperial powers does that to people. But, let's not forget that we didn't just endure the presence of the colonizer. It doesn't matter that they were Spanish, American or Japanese. We endured — and more importantly, we fought back. Although given, the deck was stacked against our ancestors and they didn't always win, but they fought back. A very good argument could be made that we don't really have a national identity, and some indigenous groups do reject the name "Filipino." However, one thing the disparate peoples and tongues that form the so-called Philippines do share is that shared history of conflict.

And you know what? That conflict never really ended. We never pushed the Spaniards out; we were bought out by the United States. After a traumatic war against the Americans and then together against the Japanese, we never really pushed out the United States either. The shrewd colonial power that it was, instead left only after it was sure that the "national government" it left behind was one that would comply with all of its demands.

The leash still exists, held by those who sold us out.

You might ask: "What's with the history lesson? You were just talking about the storm a minute ago." And yeah, I was. The Government of the Philippines, as well as their landowning and corporate sponsors, are the inheritors of a system of domination that we have yet to truly defeat (and no, the EDSA Revolt does not count).

What I'm saying is, our current slave-drivers and overlords are putting up this great show of "Filipino Resilience" in fear of what resilience has always looked like in the past half-millenia: that of the great masses of people rising up.

Yes, the great patchwork of cultures, peoples and languages that forms the so-called Philippines are resilient folk. I usually hear it from friends and family that the people are too stupid, deciding against their best interests and choosing instead to begrudgingly live with their mistakes. No, that's far from the truth. See, most people like myself are mainly concerned with immediate survival. Can't really go around and find the time to look into and research the long-term effects of your actions if you're concerned about starving tomorrow.

Now if you're reading this, it's very likely you're some stripe of anarchist or communist, or maybe even both! And good news for us is that the common person knows that shit is messed up. We just have to go point out that the continued incompetence of the administration and the greed of the landowners and the corporate sector directly undermine not only our short-term survival, but the long-term viability of life on this planet.

It's gonna be a long way ahead, and we have a lot of hearts and minds to win. But that's okay, because the Filipino is resilient. And resilience means fighting back.

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