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Hong Kong

# The Scorched Earth Tactic and the Hong Kong Resistance

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**Nearly all of Hong Kong's opposition lawmakers (or 19 out of 21) resigned after the government disqualified their four colleagues for "breaching their oath to the Basic Law" and failing to uphold China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. This is just a further development following on from August's decision: using the pretext of the pandemic, the government decided to extend the last term of the legislature by at least one year, relieving the government of holding an election as scheduled and thus preventing the pro-Beijing camp from suffering another land-slide defeat, after their total defeat in the 2019 local election. Since then the government has been calling to allow Hong Kong voters who live in Mainland to be able to vote, while ignoring the question from the opposition of "why does your plan not include voters who live overseas?". The answer is obvious – the government is trying to vote-rig so as to strengthen Beijing's control.**

We are on the verge of a great purge. One sector after another, from oppositionists, young demonstrators, to academics, teachers, civil servants, all have been victimized for the silliest charges and framed up. We have no way to launch any protest because the government, with the help of the pandemic, has forbidden all public gatherings and with good reason.

In response to mounting attacks, many people, especially the young, once again turn to the "scorched earth tactic" of last year, symbolized by the slogan "if we burn you burn with us". In August when the government extended the last term of the legislature, the opposition lawmakers wanted to accept it. Two law-makers announced that their mandate came from the voters, not from the government, hence they quit. Most stayed on however and were continuously under attack from the radicals. This is the chief reason why this time they finally quit when four of their colleagues were kicked out – the pan-democrats had long lost their credibility and they had to save the last bit of it when their colleagues were kicked out.

But people who uphold the "scorched earth tactic" have not offered any alternative to the following doubts:

"Without any sizable opposition in the legislature, the government can pass any reactionary law it likes. How are we going to stop it or at least vote against it and show the world we are the people's voice, not Beijing?"

"The status of lawmakers grants them certain privileges to monitor the executive branch and its various departments. In the present crack-down this is an important tool to protect the resistance. With all oppositionists gone, how are we going to defend our brothers and sisters?"

It is the great enthusiasm to defend Hong Kong's autonomy which has driven the resistance since last year. However this passionate movement has been driven by a people who have little political experiences in fighting despotism; for years we had been quite relaxed as we strongly, but wrongly, believed that "we are the golden egg laying goose and so Beijing will treat us well". When catastrophe stormed over their heads they thought their only tactic was the "scorched earth tactic". The downside of this tactic now is that it often allows no space for proper debate, a phenomenon already quite visible in last year's revolt. The sad thing is that, even with the best tactic and strategy, Hong Kong people are doomed in the short run anyway --- the relationship of forces is simply too asymmetrical.

There is one benefit of the resignation of nearly all pan-democrat law-makers though – it draws worldwide attention and support. Even if Hong Kong is soon to be finished off by Beijing at least it has sung its swan song.

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