

## Book Dumping and Last Stands

Weeks passed and it became clear that the Occupy camps were at an impasse. Mainstream media grew restless for a list of demands. Politicians and land-owning corporations grew weary of the encampments and moved in. As camps were shut down in London, Ontario and beyond, many Occupiers knew their time was limited. Preparations for eviction began.

A surprise midnight raid on the camp in New York City gave Occupiers no time to prepare. A police barricade around the camp, blocking access to all media, meant there was little mainstream coverage of the fate of the first People's Library. Video captured on phones by those being arrested showed the destruction of the library at the hands of the police. Books were tossed by the thousand into waiting dumpsters and hauled off to landfills. Chants of "Fahrenheit 451" echoed through the crowd of protestors and volunteer librarians who had lovingly collected and curated the 5000 plus collection of books. After the scenes in New York, the libraries in several camps were hastily dismantled and books were carted away to safe locations in the back of vans, on bikes and even in shopping carts.

In Toronto, with eviction notices served and a deadline looming, the People's Library became the site of Occupy Toronto's last stand. The yurt

“

**In Toronto, with eviction notices served and a deadline looming, the People's Library became the site of Occupy Toronto's last stand. The yurt was fortified with pallets, planks and anything else that was heavy. Inside, among the books, a few stalwart Occupiers waited for the police**

was fortified with pallets, planks and anything else that was heavy. Inside, among the books, a few stalwart Occupiers waited for the police. Eventually negotiations prevailed and the library was surrendered peacefully. The books were removed and the yurt dismantled without incident. The People's Library was closed.

## People's Library Redux

Now, with the Occupy camps all cleared, the question remains: what is the future for open, democratic lending institutions like the People's Library? In the case of occupations in New York and Vancouver, the idea of the People's Library has moved online. Vancouver's "The People's Lovely Library" website co-ordinates book donations with supporting book stores and hosts a community of library-users. In New York, after two aggressive raids by police, the library lives on in Library 3.0, a collection of mobile mini-libraries hosted in shopping carts and milk crates and appearing at Liberty Plaza and ongoing Occupy actions.

With school boards cutting Teacher-Librarian positions and cities like Toronto working to privatize public libraries, this new generation of People's Library, small, nimble and run by passionate Occupiers, is an ally in the struggle to protect libraries in all their forms. As spring arrives, expect to see the return of the People's Library in your hometown — milk crates and all. ■