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## Who Owns the World?

In 1932 Bertolt Brecht posed this question in *Kuhle Wampe*, a film about the unemployed homeless who camped beside a lake called Grosser Müggelsee. “*Kuhle Wampe*” is Berlin slang for “empty belly.” Nazis destroyed the campsites in 1934.

Nowadays the hungry and the homeless roam the world in leaky boats and broken shoes, seeking refuge under razor wire, camping in burned-out border lands. Nowadays Germany welcomes refugees with food, a place to sleep, and work.

The rich think they own the world, and the outspoken are wiped out by surveillance, by secret police, by drones. Survivors go silent, and silence owns the world. But silence is not human, and when the ruling class collapses, outspoken survivors think they own the world.

May Day 2017 in Portland anarchists in black ski masks break windows and start fires in the street. They know an unsustainable system has to fall. Cops in black helmets herd them along with truncheons and flash grenades.

To answer Brecht’s question, no one owns the world. Air, water, and light go everywhere, like refugees. In truth the world owns us, and to this truth we owe our lives. When people have forgotten this, we live in dark times.