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I had heard of this Real Rent idea but never looked into it til now. The idea is that the people who live and work in Seattle (and other places founded on indigenous land) should pay something on top of the pittance granted by treaties, if any. 1/

Real Rent Duwamish
Pay Rent to the Duwamish Tribe: Support the Duwamish Tribal Services through Monthly Giving
<https://www.realrentduwamish.org>

At first glance it sounds like a fine idea but I think it's like so many of the solutions around inequality and social justice...it misses the point, asks the wrong people to make good on the wrongs of the past. 2/

What is Real Rent?

Real Rent calls on people who live and work in Seattle to make rent payments to the Duwamish Tribe. Though the city named for the Duwamish leader Chief Seattle thrives, **the Tribe has yet to be justly compensated for their land, resources, and livelihood.**

You can do something today to stand in solidarity with First Peoples of this land by **paying Real Rent.**

All funds go directly to Duwamish Tribal Services (DTS) to support the revival of Duwamish culture and the vitality of the Duwamish Tribe.

Join this grassroots movement today! **Become a Real Renter.**

There is no doubt that everyone who benefits from what Seattle has to offer owes something to those who were here first and were forced to bargain for what was theirs. And we know that the indigenous peoples didn't own land as colonizers and settlers do. 3/

Generations of **Seattleites continue to benefit** from the Duwamish People's presence and stewardship of this land. Today, tribal elders spend countless hours offering blessings at events and **educating our community** on the rich history of this place and her Peoples. **We could not call this city home without the Duwamish Tribe.**

They put it to use for the benefit of all. If this beach had the best clamming, no one would consider dragging boats across it. The land and its value belonged to all. So who should be paying the Real Rent? Does Seattle levy a Real Rent on land owners to repay the Duwamish? 4/

If not, why not? By asking the people who live and work here to pay a rent for the use of land, we accept that land and location have value, that access to land should be paid for. In effect, we accept that ground rents are real. 5/

Our government hasn't honored the treaty, but WE can.

In 1971, 1,000 Duwamish members were paid \$64 each for their land.

That is **\$64,000 for 54,000 acres of land.**

\$64,000 adjusted for inflation today would maybe buy a **single 1,000 square foot tiny home.**

In 2017, the median household income for Seattleites was **\$82,133.**

We need to work together to begin to **account for this and countless other inequities.**

So how do we get from a token payment to the Duwamish to a rent that compensates them and everyone who lives and works to build value today? If Seattle's downtown land is worth \$1M/ year (as has been offered but declined), how much would we be able to share with the Duwamish? 6/

A lot of the chatter I hear around housing affordability and inequality is best described as "admiring the problem." If you buy into the idea of Real Rent, you already accept the concept of ground rents. There is no affordable housing without affordable land... 7/

...and ground rents are a way to lower the cost to acquire land for affordable, vs luxurious/speculative/investment grade, development. Vacancy taxes and head taxes and income taxes are all distractions. The unanimous head tax was killed by one plutocrat with connections... 8/

Does anyone think an income tax or other scheme won't be riddled with exemptions and carve outs? But assess a rent on the land — immovable and transparently assessed — and see what happens. A split-rate rent, to be sure, with land paying more than buildings... 9/

Odd that this revelation should come on the eve of Indigenous Peoples Day but perhaps fitting as well. They — the Duwamish and other local peoples — knew the value of location but also that land didn't belong to anyone. How can you own what you never made unless you stole it? 10/

Proudhon had something to say about that...

If you are paying Real Rent, good for you; but if you are also a tenant, ask yourself why *you* are paying a ground rent vs the person who reaps where they never sowed, who makes money while you sleep? 11/F

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