

"I am trying to get together material for the President's report, and also for the report of the Treasurer, to be presented at the Third Annual Conference. Will you send me, as promised, the list of collections you have made, so that I can have them entered on the Treasurer's books?"

You ignored this letter, and also a subsequent request of the same tenor. On October 13th, 1915, I made a third demand in a written communication as follows:

"Your failure to answer my two previous letters asking for your report on activities and finances makes me apprehensive. I believe that the League has treated you with decent consideration and is entitled to fair treatment from you. It is incumbent upon the League to make a report upon the moneys received and expended by it, and by you in its name, to avoid any suspicion that money subscribed to the League had been frittered away uselessly. I wish you would give me a frank statement of your intentions, so that the League may proceed in its course without any unnecessary embarrassment."

To none of these communications have I received any reply. Whatever inferences are drawn arise from your refusal to make an accounting. My statement at the Club was made openly, and you had ample opportunity then and there to deny it, and your failure to do so no doubt influenced the judgment of the persons present.

Until you make a denial of the facts I have set forth in this letter I can see no reason for a committee hearing.

BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

OFFICERS  
JAMES R. BROWN,  
President  
ALFRED BISHOP MASON,  
Vice-President  
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SYLVESTER L. MALONE  
WILLIAM W. WHEATLY

## Manhattan Single Tax Club

FOUNDED BY HENRY GEORGE

47 WEST 42D STREET

New York

TELEPHONE, VANDERBILT 5645

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

John H. Adamson  
Chas. Frederick Adams  
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John H. Scully  
Fred. R. Seeman  
E. J. Shriver  
Geo. W. Thompson, M. D.  
Charles J. Walton  
Harry Weinberger

Jan. 11—17.

SIR:

And so like a yellow dog you are afraid to come forward, for you know you cannot make good the charge that I collected money for the League and failed to account for it. If you were a man instead of a malicious liar and coward you would jump at the chance, come forward and nail me to the cross. You know damn well I never collected any money in the name of the League, and you never have been able to state a single dollar I have not accounted for, to the only people who were entitled to an accounting. You have never been able to raise any money for the League. Nor can any one else; but I can raise all the money I need for all the work I am doing. Please take note of this fact, no man who has ever paid me a dollar, has ever made any complaint but has always repeated his contributions. Every man in the movement in N. Y. who is worth considering is with me, has been from the first and is stauncher than ever my friend, in spite of you or any other malicious liars—Nothing you can say worries me in the least. I simply gave you a chance to play the man and you have crawled. You poor miserable faker.

JAS. R. BROWN.

OFFICE OF  
BENJAMIN DOBLIN  
68 WILLIAM STREET  
NEW YORK

8387

NEW YORK, JANUARY 22, 1917

## To the Members of the Executive Committee New York State Single Tax League

I GREATLY DEPLORE THE NECESSITY THAT IMPELS ME TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION A DISAGREEABLE MATTER THAT HAS ARISEN OUT OF THE DISCHARGE OF MY DUTIES AS AN OFFICER OF THE LEAGUE. I BELIEVE THAT CONTINUED FORBEARANCE MIGHT BE HARMFUL AND POSSIBLY CENSURABLE IT WILL CERTAINLY BE MISINTERPRETED AND SUBJECT ME TO MORE VITUPERATION.

THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECTLY FREE TO DETERMINE WHAT IS FOR THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CAUSE, I TENDER TO YOU AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MY RESIGNATION AS TREASURER AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NEW YORK STATE SINGLE TAX LEAGUE.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I REQUEST THAT YOU SEND YOUR DECISION ON MY RESIGNATION TO THE PRESIDENT, MR. JOSEPH DANA MILLER, 150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

SINCERELY YOURS,

BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

\* \* \* \* \*

Extract from Constitution of the New York State Single Tax League.

(4.) The Officers shall be a President, not less than Ten nor more than Fifteen Vice-Presidents; Secretary; Two Assistant Secretaries and a Treasurer. There shall also be not less than Fifteen members appointed annually by the President, who, together with the Officers shall constitute the Executive Committee.

(6.) The Executive Committee shall have full Authority and shall be charged with the duty of directing and energizing the League.

\* \* \* \* \*

In March, 1914, a two-page circular letter was mailed to the enrollment of The New York State Single Tax League entitled "Tentative Report on State Organization." I submit the second paragraph as indicative of its purport:

"The best and most economical method of arousing public interest in this question is by engaging a State organizer who will make numerous addresses, visit personally all important towns, through the State, establish local branches of the State League and arrange meetings of various kinds before church organizations, clubs, schools, commercial and legislative bodies and make a determined effort to enlarge our enrollment by adding the names of all unattached Single Taxers."

This letter was accompanied by a four-page circular giving "Tentative Report on State Organizer," "Report on Collegiate Single Tax Clubs," "High School Prize Essay Contest."

We were indebted to Mr. Northrup for proposed plans and budget of State Organizer and Lecturer.

Though the project was heartily favored by the members, we were obliged to hold it in abeyance for lack of sufficient funds. This was the situation when early in November, 1914, Mr. James R. Brown, upon his return from participation in the California Campaign, visited the office and learning the state of our finances, offered to act as Field Secretary and Lecturer, and raise the necessary money to establish this activity permanently, provided the League would pay him \$30.00 a week until the first of the year.

He had no other commitments and I considered it a happy solution of our problem. Here was a Single Taxer who could do the job; it was the kind of work he enjoyed doing and had been engaged in for a long time.

I surmised he felt confident he could command the financial support to sustain the work after it was once started; that he only required to be carried along until the first of the year while he was engaged in soliciting contributions. I was dealing with him in absolute good faith. His experience, earnestness and assurance quieted any doubts I might have had of his ability to make good his part of the arrangement.

The League faithfully observed its part of the agreement. When the time came for Mr. Brown to start his work, he calmly reniged. He required, he said, \$50.00 a week for travelling expenses and for personal compensation.

This new and unexpected demand disquieted me. I sought to excuse this new demand by assuming that I may have been in error in not correctly interpreting his original proposition. I wanted to believe that he was acting on the square. It was an awkward situation. To terminate the arrangement might provoke ill-feeling and recrimination and not forward the work any, but on the contrary, endanger future growth of the newly organized State League.

Much, I thought, will be overlooked if we succeed in doing the work and I told him again the condition of our treasury—without enthusiasm—we had some money but not sufficient to carry this disbursement long. We discussed the prospects for raising more money and agreed that Single Taxers while indifferent to proposed projects, would gladly support an activity if it practically demonstrated its worth. We both felt confident that after some months in the field we could readily raise the fund if some one would go after it.

I was so anxious to continue his activity in the field for as long a time as possible—so that he would have abundant proof of his effectiveness—that I held up all other bills and drained the treasury to keep him out.

Appended is a statement copied from the League's accounts of payments made to Mr. Brown from which it is evident that the \$50.00 was paid religiously until the week of June 2nd. (He spent sometime in Canada and Rhode Island, which of course was not chargeable against the New York State Single Tax League.)

#### JAMES R. BROWN ACCOUNT.

1914		1915	
Nov. 21.....	\$30	Apr. 3.....	\$50
28.....	30	10.....	50
Dec. 7.....	30	17.....	50
14.....	30	24.....	50
19.....	30	May 1.....	50
26.....	30	7.....	50
1915		15.....	50
Jan. 2.....	30	22.....	50
18.....	50	June 2.....	50
Feb. 1.....	20	11.....	20
8.....	20	16.....	20
10.....	50	24.....	10
Mar. 3.....	25	July 3.....	30
13.....	50	27.....	25
21.....	50		

The League offered Mr. Brown's services as a lecturer anywhere in the State without charge. He was instructed, however, to collect travelling expenses and a lecture fee, wherever possible.

Our relations are fairly well shown by the following letters: January 19th, 1915, addressed to James R. Brown, Hotel Touraine, Buffalo.

"I learn to-day that you got a subscription from Charlie Adams in aid of our work. I wonder whether you got any others. I think you will agree that it is unwise to make a couple of bites at the apple in the matter of raising funds; that all subscriptions should come to the League and be credited on our books, so that the disbursements can be properly accounted for."

To which the following answer was received from Buffalo dated January 23rd:

"Re cash, I have received two voluntary subs, to our work, one from Sylvester Malone of \$10 about three weeks ago which was a repetition of what he gave this time last year for my work in N. S. On the last day I was in New York, after I left you, I ran in to see Adams and he, when he heard I was going out, kindly came up with \$10.00 with assurances of more a little later on. I am keeping exact a/c of all I receive and all my disbursements in connection with this work and will be able to make an exact account of same. If the League wishes to relieve me of any collection of money except while on the road, I will cheerfully assent to being relieved. So far, on the road, while I have received some entertainment, I have not received any cash for expenses even, in fact, under the conditions, I don't expect it. Until we can stir up interest we cannot expect people to even pay expenses."

Letter to Mr. Brown:

"25th of January, 1915.

"Regarding the two voluntary subscriptions to your work; I note that you will make a report, and that it will be incorporated as part of the activities of the League. There is no objection, of course, to your collecting money on the Road, in fact, you ought to keep your business eye peeled for all the financial support in sight, so that we might nurse it along, and get results from it in the future.

I think you will agree that the League can raise the money easier and in larger amounts than you can, because we make it part of a program, and the work seems to merit a larger subscription than just one particular thing could command. I agree with you that we cannot expect to receive much financial support from your present trip; we must look upon it as a seed planting process. I am satisfied, however, that we will get all the support necessary after our first year's activities—it is the first year's expenses that has me apprehensive."

Letter from Mr. Brown:

"Buffalo, N. Y., Feb. 20.

I am writing you a detailed account of each meeting since I left for Olean, but I am kept on the jump day and night and find it hard to finish, but just now only a note. \* \* \* \* \*

The Socialists have not coughed up yet, but the "Twins" are hot on their trail. I got \$2.00 from the church where Will heard me and also \$10.00 from the B of T at Lockport, but that is all as yet."

On February 23rd, I wrote him to Buffalo:

"There is no need of your sending in a detailed report of your activities at once if the writing of it would consume any time and energy that had better be devoted to the work in the field. Reports can be made at any old time when we have the leisure. While you are on the ground you want to send in all the strong licks that opportunity offers. I hope you have found a way of tying up the interest aroused so that it may become useful in spreading the doctrine. I have not myself been able to think out a way in which it could be done, but I know that you are evolving the plan out of your experience that will turn the trick.

General propaganda is good but it is not nourishing unless we can convert a fair percentage of it into active workers. We are trying to organize the State so that we shall have the necessary support to continue our activity in the future

without depending upon a few big subscribers. You sent me a paper containing the advertisement signed James R. Brown, President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. This got Lustgarten's goat. There was no advantage to the club in that announcement and it did not help the League any. It would have been just as effective an announcement if it had stated that you were speaking under the auspices of the State League after reciting that you were President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. I think you get the idea, which is that the State League has got to be put upon the map to make it an efficient agency for continuous propaganda. We have no little petty pride about the organization, nor is it our purpose to exalt the name as a name; what we have in mind is the building up of a real, vigorous organization that can do the work."

From Mr. Brown's letter, dated April 15th, 1915.

"Enclosed find list of subscribers up to date. As soon as I clean up my desk and get a lot of work under way for upstate, I am going to give enough time to finance and fix our work for the future securely."

List of subscribers accompanying this letter:

J. Fink .....	\$10	S. Malone .....	\$25	C. H. Ingersoll...	\$50
A. Weymann ....	50	C. J. Walton...	25	John Z. Lowe....	120
W. Ryan .....	5	Oscar Geiger ..	50	J. J. Hopper.....	50
		K.....	\$25		
		John J. Murphy.....			

The amount of these subscriptions was made immediately available through the kindness of Mr. Lustgarten who cashed them for the League.

Murphy and Fink subscriptions had already been given to the Treasurer some time before the receipt of Mr. Brown's list.

Our books show payments credited on these subscriptions as follows:

Aug. 3—J. Fink.....	\$10	May 29—C. J. Walton.....	\$10
June 17—W. Ryan.....	5	June 17—C. H. Ingersoll....	50
May 25—S. Malone.....	10	July 3—J. Z. Lowe.....	10
July 3— " .....	5	May 22— " .....	10
June 11—K.....	\$10		
July 3— " .....	15		
July 10—J. J. Murphy.....	20		

It was a sore disappointment to me that Mr. Brown's solicitations, beginning about June 9, did not bring us any new subscribers in addition to those on his April 15th list, though he had been in the field two months longer when he made this canvass.

From a letter dated April 28, from Mr. Brown, I submit this postscript:

"As soon as I can I must put in two or three weeks on finances and lick them into shape as we cannot ride a willing horse like Will (Lustgarten) to death and I am sure we can raise the money if we go after it. J."

Extract from letter of J. E. Ward, Albany, June 4th.

"I paid J. R. Brown \$7.00 personally. I gave \$1.00 towards his expenses the 2nd day."

From Mr. E. J. Shriver word came that he had given Mr. Brown a check for the League which was not reported. This contributor writes under date of November 16th.

"Am handing you another check for \$25.00 to take the place of the one that was to some extent lost in the shuffle."

My dear Doblin: N. Y. City, January 19th, 1917.

Replying to your inquiry as to the circumstances of the first subscription I made to the lecture fund of the New York State Single Tax League through Mr. James R. Brown, Mr. Brown called at my office with a number of newspaper clippings showing the character of the work he had been doing for the League and requested me to make a contribution. This I did to the extent of

\$25.00 and asked him how the cheque should be drawn which he said ought to be to his order. I drew it accordingly in that way but on getting my balance back from the bank I noticed while it contained his endorsement it did not contain the endorsement of the League, so I inquired of Mr. Lustgarten and was informed that the collection had not been reported to the League.

Yours truly,

(Signed) E. J. SHRIVER.

No mention was made to Mr. Brown about these two cases. I thought it best to wait until he made the promised complete detailed report, possibly, I hoped, that would contain a satisfactory explanation.

We discussed this question of accountability quite conclusively at the time I learned he had not informed the Treasurer that he received some part of the receipts from a debate with a socialist in Buffalo [see letter Feb. 20] where an admission fee was charged. When questioned about it, he told me that he had only got a part of it and "spent it for cats." I then told him as soberly as I could, that that would not do. All moneys collected must be reported and passed through the books of the League.

After the exhaustion of our Treasury, I told Mr. Brown I thought enough had been done to satisfy our friends that this activity was effective and merited their financial support; to go out and explain the splendid opportunity and see if he could raise the necessary financial support. He asked me what compensation he was to get. I wanted to know what he expected. He replied \$50 a week. I demurred because I could not justify it to the subscribers; he had received that amount when he had travelling expenses to pay. I thought the \$30.00 he had previously fixed was fair compensation. He told me that I had no reason to kick because he would not get anything unless he collected it. That appealed to me as reasonable. He might collect not more than \$10 a week and would be fortunate indeed if he collected on the average \$40 per week. It was desirable, I thought, to get this activity before contributors. Once their support was enlisted, it might be counted upon for renewals, then if Mr. Brown should be called by a business opportunity, or for some other reason to abandon the work, another could be engaged to take his place. Unless there was reasonable assurance of at least a year's support, the choice of a field secretary and lecturer would be too limited to insure success. I suggested \$40 a week, if he collected it, which he accepted.

He was told to bring in all contributions, which would be promptly acknowledged and he would receive whatever was due him. He assented to this arrangement.

The items on the J. R. Brown's account from June 11th to July 27th confirms this understanding of our arrangement.

Mr. Brown would come to the office on Saturday morning with one or two checks made to the order of The New York State Single Tax League. These checks would be entered upon the Treasurer's books, acknowledgment made to the subscriber and cash paid to Mr. Brown to cover. We did not, to my best recollection, ever receive a check made payable to the order of Mr. Brown or, except as previously stated, get a report from him of any cash contributions.

There was no formal severance of his connection with the League. Until I began to call for a statement to be included in the League's annual report, he was a constant visitor to the office. After dunning him for reports, his visits ceased without explanation—even to this day.

I bore him no ill will. Our relations had been amicable. The League's annual report shows that he was credited with whatever commendation was coming to him. This report was prepared after all my disquieting experiences. I felt that it was more important to elevate the Cause than to depress an individual.

Mr. Brown's activity was the most expensive work of the year. As a matter of fact, six months of it cost more than any other activity for a whole year. If you

will examine the Treasurer's report in Bulletin No. 3, for the year ending September 30th, 1915, you will observe there is nothing to balance Mr. Brown's expenditures.\* This omission was due to Mr. Brown's stubborn refusal to make a report, though he is an expert accountant and should be one of the first to realize the necessity of reports from one acting in a fiduciary capacity.

For your information I submit without any additional comment the recent correspondence between us.

\*\$1,090.00—This does not include any miscellaneous expenses, printing, postage, etc.

796 Lexington Avenue,  
New York, N. Y., December 1, 1916.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE  
MANHATTAN SINGLE TAX CLUB:

Mr. James R. Brown has announced his candidacy for a third successive term as President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club.

I am opposed to his re-election.

Let me assure you this opposition is based solely upon a consideration for the welfare of the club and the progress of our cause. You will agree with me, I hope, that the club action should be directed to the cultivation of harmony among its members; that disruptive influences should be disfavored. Mr. Brown permits his personal animosity against some members to govern his official conduct. Because of this a number of loyal and active workers have ceased to participate in the work of the club.

One who was present at the birth of the club has naturally, through years of continuous association, a sentimental attachment for it. Escape from disagreeable conditions through resignation is not an easy solution for me; then, too, I believed his incumbency of the office would not last forever, that after filling two and one-half terms as President of the Club he should surrender the office. I would not now ventilate the matter were it not that I desire to foreclose any future possible charge that I did not afford the members severally a fair opportunity, upon information, to determine club conduct.

There is a matter of club policy that I wish to submit for your consideration and action. The Manhattan Single Tax Club is and should be distinctly a New York City organization; this is a field large enough for its most ambitious propaganda program.

I do not question the right of a single taxpayer to speak where or when he pleases; on the contrary, I believe we should encourage individual activity, but if the President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club competes with the New York State Single Tax League, how is the League to explain to puzzled inquirers that there is no conflict between League and Club?

Mr. Brown should either abandon his State lecturing activity or surrender the presidency of the club so that he shall appear in his true light, a free lance.

There are indications of an antipathetic feeling toward the State League upon the part of the official head of the Club, and if he is re-elected, I fear he will construe it as a vindication of his attitude and a commission from the club members to push his feeling of hostility to the limit.

I wish to submit for your determination the advisability of a declaration of policy for the club to the effect that first: The Manhattan Single Tax Club concentrate its propaganda efforts upon New York City. Second: That the Manhattan Single Tax Club co-operate with the New York State Single Tax League.

I am enclosing a bulletin descriptive of the League's aims and objects. Also a circular about Mr. Morton's activity.

Yours fraternally,

BENJAMIN DOBLIN

OFFICERS  
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President  
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Vice-President  
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Treasurer  
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Manhattan Single Tax Club

FOUNDED BY HENRY GEORGE

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E. J. Shriver  
Geo. W. Thompson, M. D.  
Charles J. Walton  
Harry Weinberger

MR. BENJAMIN DOBLIN,  
68 William Street,  
New York City.

January 3, 1917.

SIR:

On the occasion of the Annual Election of this Club, you made very serious charges against me. True it was by inference and insinuation, rather than by a manly plain statement, but assault it was.

Now I demand of you that you appear before a committee of the Club, and make good your charges. Bring on your proof and witnesses if you have any, and I promise that if you can prove that I have mis-appropriated, mis-used or mis-applied any Single Tax money, I will stand ready to apologize and make restitution.

January 24th, 8 P. M. at the Club Room, will suit me, and I trust it will suit your convenience.

The committee will be made up of members of the Club, in good standing who were present election night and heard your verbal assault. I will submit their names one week before the hearing.

Yours truly,

(Signed) JAMES R. BROWN.

A SINGLE TAXER IS ONE WHO WORKS FOR THE SINGLE TAX

68 William Street,  
New York City,

MR. JAMES R. BROWN,  
Manhattan Single Tax Club,  
47 West 42nd Street,  
New York City.

January 6th, 1917.

SIR:

This is to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 3rd instant in which you demand that I appear before a committee of the Manhattan Single Tax Club—which committee you say you will appoint—and make good my charges against you expressed on the occasion of the annual election of the Club.

You probably know that I restrained myself from saying anything about the sad experience I have suffered in my business relations with you and your son. This repression may have given others the idea that I made serious charges against you "by inference and insinuation rather than by a manly, plain statement."

My charge against you was stated succinctly, and I thought clearly enough. I charged that you had collected money as the League's representative (which you were authorized to do) for which you refused to make an accounting. On September 14th, 1915, I wrote you the following letter, addressed to the Manhattan Single Tax Club: